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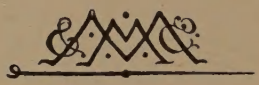
WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?



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WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

BEING LECTURES ON THE INCARNATION AND ITS INTERPRETATION IN TERMS OF MODERN THOUGHT

BY THE

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INTRODUCTION

THE purpose of these lectures is a simple one. For nearly two thousand years the world has been confronted with a great question, "What think ye of Christ"? and every generation, every individual, must answer it according to his power. Indifference to it, though so common, is impertinent and should be impossible: for Jesus is too large a figure, and His Church too real a fact, for any to disregard them. Our answer may be "the Christ of God," or it may be "the Galilean impostor." There is no middle way.

And at the present moment the challenge comes with a peculiar urgency. If we are to "redeem the time," it is abundantly plain that this world of ours, which is now melting in the furnace of war, must be remodelled "nearer to the heart's desire." So far we

are all agreed : for we are enabled to bear the tragedies of to-day solely by reason of this hope in the recompense of to-morrow. The stimulus of present evil has produced in us, as it did in the Apocalyptists, a clearer faith in the better time coming, a deeper longing for the New Jerusalem whose advent is heralded by fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

The peril of such an age of expectancy is just this, that, when all men are crying out for progress, they may without study of the past or plans for the future squander the opportunity upon petty and perfunctory changes, or plunge us into an epoch of chaotic and misguided experiments. We must needs settle first the general principles on which our reforms are to be made. We must decide, before casting our molten metal, into what shape we desire it to harden. We must choose a model for our new humanity, and before we begin to consider the many specimens submitted by the creators of modern Utopias, it is perhaps wise to decide once for all our verdict upon the great One who claimed to be the type of a true manhood, who called

Himself the "Son of Man," and was called by His greatest follower the "Image of God." If we accept Him, there will be no need of further search: we can fashion our reform after His pattern and begin forthwith. If we reject—at least, we shall know where we are!

And there is at the moment an additional reason which makes it important for us who believe to say what we think of the Christ. There exists a large and increasing number of people who feel and confess without shame the attractiveness of Jesus, who admit Him to be the noblest figure in history, and who cherish His example and accept His teaching, but who are perplexed by the difficulties in Gospels and Creeds, and repelled by the failure of the Church to explain or even to admit them. When they want discussion, they are offered dogma: when they express their doubts, they are denounced as sceptics; when they look for truth and honesty, they find suspicion, subterfuge, and self-deception. Our young enthusiasts are constantly being crushed by the refusal of Christians to move with the times; and their complaints, if often loud, are often real. Like Saul of Tarsus they

must either persecute or champion the faith; and we force them to be foes not friends.

All of us, who have felt depressed by the tragedy of Galileo and its endless repetitions throughout history, must sympathise with the children of our Mother who ask for bread and receive stones. But we must realise too that the matter is one of no small difficulty. If the Church has failed, she has at least a good excuse for her failure. Very few Christians can combine the duty of study with the care of souls. Clerical life demands a vast versatility from its followers: and no man can be at once preacher, relieving officer, universal confidant, and expert in theology. So we are content to leave the answering of hard questions and the task of restatement to a few dons and professors, and, moreover, to make it almost impossible for the results of their work to be brought within the outlook of the parish priest. If religion was a subject like mathematics, in which a theoretic truth could of necessity be translated exactly into practice, the difficulty would be less serious. But in the religious sphere, unlike the mathematical, the validity of a theory

can only be tested in its actual working. For a theology if it is to be acceptable must not only be subjected to the enquiry, "Is this true?" but to the sterner question, "Does this work? Does it save souls?" The "Salvation-value," the test of fruits, is a more ultimate criterion than the logical correctness of a religious formula, and therefore the don is of all men the least fitted to undertake the business of restatement: for he is a specialist and tainted with the academic habit—that is, he is somewhat less than a man. The professional theologian, like the economist, is always being upset by that elusive and perturbing human element which so often vitiates his paper-schemes and falsifies his mechanical calculations. Our professors are willing enough, perhaps too willing, to elaborate new theologies. But their efforts are of little value unless theory can be demonstrated in practice. The professors can rarely do this for themselves: the parish clergy can hardly find time to do it for them. There is the dilemma, and until it is resolved the progress of religious reform will be tedious, and cannot safely be hurried.

It is because I have had for some years the opportunity of academic research, and have since the war been enabled to bring the beliefs thus formulated into touch with life in an old-fashioned parish, that I am venturing to outline an answer to the great question. It will perhaps suggest to others fresh lines of thought or of criticism. Even errors, if they are honest, have helped to a fuller understanding of truth.

In doing so I have tried to be frank, brutally frank, not hesitating to express doubt or confess ignorance, but being more concerned with the positive than the negative, with construction than criticism. If certain phrases are reckless or exaggerated, or if, as is sure to be the case, there are not only grave omissions but grave misstatements, I would only beg that my work may be judged as a whole and not by isolated sentences or *obiter dicta*. In lectures originally given and now offered to those who would not call themselves experts in theology it has been necessary in most cases to state broad conclusions as clearly as possible, without discussing and often without fully citing the

detailed evidence. This is especially the case in the sketch of historical Christology in the second lecture, where I have deliberately avoided encumbering the argument and distracting the reader with a mass of references and quotations, such as would be needful if I were writing a history of the doctrine: and the same principle of suppressing what would be useless to the average educated Christian has guided me throughout. My work will of course suffer proportionately in the eyes of professional theologians, to whom I should like to apologise most sincerely for daring to state views on debateable points without reserve and without supplying the full data on which my judgment has been formed. I must apologise also and on the same grounds for having generally omitted reference to the many books and many scholars from whom I have received help.

Having taken this line and decided not to fortify my opinion by an elaborate apparatus of cross-references and parallels, it is perhaps only right, at the risk of seeming egotistical, to follow the example of the authors of that brave and stimulating appeal, entitled "*Faith*

or Fear ? " and give a brief account of my experience and credentials.

Like most boys who have spent some years in the sixth form of a public school, I went up to Cambridge with a fair knowledge of the language of the New Testament, but with little idea of the relationship between the facts therein recorded and my own religious emotions. In consequence, before leaving school doubts had begun to arise, and as soon as the conspiracy of silence was broken and I discovered that unbelief did not necessarily involve either intellectual blindness or moral leprosy, my faith was rudely shattered. Like the majority of my contemporaries, for at that time scientific materialism was still strong, I spent my first two years at the University in a state of scepticism, relieved indeed by moments of something like the ecstasy of the mystics, but overshadowing my whole mental outlook.

Gradually the evidences of power in the lives of one or two Christians made me think furiously, and the influence of a friend and fellow-seeker helped me to build up again little by little the temple of God that had

been so ruthlessly, so sadly, despoiled. The careful study of the Epistle to the Romans opened my eyes to the true significance of faith, and a year's solid reading of Church history and Patristic theology gave me proof of the efficacy of that faith in action in the lives of the saints. A period of work in the Education Office of a great city, when my evenings were divided between writing a thesis for a fellowship on the Apollinarian heresy and helping in a large undenominational boys' club, brought me into touch with poverty and practical religion, and with that living Jesus whose resurrection I had come to accept on grounds of historical evidence, but without fully realising its vital and present effects.

Then the call came suddenly for me to return to Cambridge; I was ordained, and found myself responsible for the Christian life of a College which was at that time the scene of a strong anti-Christian crusade. The whole tone of feeling in the University both on moral and on religious questions had been for some years very unsettled, partly owing to the preaching of hedonist or

neo-Hellenic ideas, which were too often made attractive as the excuse for sexual perversion and secret vice, but still more owing to the offence caused to the ablest and most honest undergraduates by the foolish dogmas, incessant quarrellings, and obvious ineffectiveness, of professing Christians. The atmosphere was heavy and oppressive, charged with hidden menace, until the action of the late Master of Emmanuel College brought about a crisis and cleared the air like a thunderstorm. His campaign, so sincerely and vigorously conducted, did an immense amount of good to the cause which he attacked. Christians were put on their defence and forced to close their ranks and to cease from petty disputes and intrigues against one another. They were obliged to discover what was essential in their religion, to concentrate upon its protection, and to revise antiquated methods and jettison effete ideas. Commonsense was brought to bear upon theology ; solid ground was sought and under God found ; and a remarkable revival of Christian fellowship and Christian study was inaugurated.

But naturally at first there was chaos,

and into the very vortex of it I was flung as a newly-ordained deacon, scarcely older than my own senior undergraduates. For eighteen months life was one long struggle against dominant unbelief, a struggle in which I had many splendid helpers but none the less had to bear as best I could the main burden of the fray. I shall never forget those fortnightly meetings of the Religious Discussion Society founded by Mr. Chawner and consisting of twelve members, of whom for my first year I was the sole professing Christian. They were an able group of men: and I used to come away from the meetings literally worn out with the strain of my puny efforts to make a case for the faith that was in me, to maintain it against the arguments of those whose views ranged from the Stoic to the hedonist, from the Fabian to the Nietzscheite, and who were united only in this, that all denied and would fain destroy the creed of Christ. Through the aching shame at my own impotence and the glad assurance that despite my failures the Faith still stood true, my half-formed beliefs became clearer and more defined. I

discovered that utter sincerity was the only possible method, that catch-words, ideas taken on trust and clothed in cant phrases, were useless, nay subversive, that it was impossible to convince others of what I was not prepared to state logically and defend without appeals to external authority, and that the personality and claims of Jesus came to mean more and more both to me and to my opponents while the metaphysics of the Creeds meant less and less. And so through the year of chaos and the calmer times of reconstruction that followed, there was formed in me the theology of which these lectures are the outline. My own work as a student and teacher of the New Testament and of Church History supplied the academic knowledge, but it was in living contact with young men and especially with unbelievers that this knowledge was framed into a gospel, an interpretation of Christ in the terms of my own time. Whatever its errors, technical or actual, I can at least claim that it has not been developed *in vacuo*, but from personal experience in my own self, and daily study in others, of the difficulties which my genera-

tion feels and of the theories to which it turns for help.

I should not have ventured to publish these lectures unless I had had the opportunity of taking my views out of the "hot-house" atmosphere of a University and testing them in a wider field. Eighteen months of parochial work in all its branches in a traditionally Protestant parish, and of teaching many boys of various ages, have helped to confirm but scarcely to modify them. And in addition long discussion with my brother, whose mind and training are very similar, but whose experience both at Cambridge and as a curate in a "slum" and High-church parish is totally dissimilar to my own, has given me the security of corroboration from an independent source. As it is, I submit them primarily to the consideration of those who like myself are young, in the belief that in these days nothing is of more importance than the full and fearless discussion of the Christian faith, in the knowledge that conventional teaching leaves vast masses indifferent, and very many hostile, and in the hope that even if my work is found

to be unacceptable and not according to the mind of the Church, yet it is good to come out from the shelter of the " dim religious light " and to tell as simply and unreservedly as we can what we believe and why we believe it.

One point remains. There exist certain large groups of religious people who will dispute the elementary axioms of my belief, and are hereby warned that these lectures are not intended for them. I refer to all those who on one ground or another maintain that in religion restatement is neither necessary nor possible, since all matters in dispute can be settled by submission to an authority of an infallible or absolute character, that is, to an authority whose verdict is to be accepted without question as final and decisive. Their position is vastly attractive, splendidly consistent, and lucidly clear. The power that they draw from it is self-evident. But—we part company, on my side most regretfully but without the slighest hesitation, from the very first.

This matter of authority is in fact the great wall of partition between Christians

at the present moment. The old party distinctions, Catholic and Protestant, sacramental and non-sacramental, are tending slowly to disappear. The true cleavage seems rather to be between those who maintain that our knowledge of religion is derived directly from the Spirit of God acting independently of any human medium and therefore wielding an inerrant authority, and those who deny that such direct and unmediated action of God exists at all within our "space-time" environment. The fact that those who accept this kind of authority locate it differently, though it perhaps casts doubt upon the plausibility of their whole contention, is comparatively unimportant. If I am a Protestant, I shall look for an infallible guide in the written word. If I am a Catholic, I shall prefer the tradition of the universal Church as the supreme court of appeal. If I am a Roman, I shall yield allegiance to the throne of St. Peter. The three positions may differ totally in all else: they have one great bond between them in the claim that in the sphere of religion an assurance of certainty exists different in kind

from that which we can find in any other aspect of life. And as such they diverge entirely and beyond compromise from the position of those who would make authority in this as in all other fields of study a matter of evidence and of the balance of probabilities.

Recent events have made it abundantly clear that this deep-seated cleavage is not a mere matter of theory. The various champions of authority are discovering their agreement, and are showing a readiness to postpone their quarrels as to the localising of this authority, in order to unite in crushing those who deny its existence. A curious alliance between (say) the Dean of Canterbury and the Secretary of the English Church Union over the matter of Prayer-Book Revision has long been noticeable ; and the recent dispute about women preachers has provided a similar instance of extremes meeting. Indeed the definite proposal that the extremists should combine forces in order to put the moderates to shame was made not long ago in a correspondence in the *Church Times*. The claim on which such movements are based, that only men of rigid and precise views are free

from the sin of the Laodiceans, is one for which we must admit that much can be said. Dogmatism of a narrow type has always fostered enthusiasm ; and the splendid energy of the fanatic is something which those who plead for a broader outlook cannot but reverence and envy. But, for all that, to many of us the belief in an ultimate and inerrant authority as essential to the nature of religion could only be accepted at the cost of our intellectual honesty. We feel the temptation to escape from the toil of thinking out a position. We long to be able to take refuge and be at peace under the protection of an infallible guide. We realise only too well the grave peril of individualism and the hideous likelihood of error. Yet we dare not deny the right and responsibility of our reason to "prove all things." We cannot repudiate God's gift of free and intelligent choice. We must maintain that, if faith be an easy reliance on external law embodied in Church or Scriptures, then we have returned to the dispensation of the Old Testament and sacrificed that liberty which Jesus came to bring and Paul laboured to preach. If our effective-

ness is thereby weakened, we confess the fault, but refuse to believe that we shall repair it by accepting what is in our judgment a false position. We must be true to ourselves, else shall we never be true to others. Sincerity must not be sacrificed even in the interests of efficiency.

Moreover, we are supported in this refusal by the sure knowledge that our position, right or wrong, is that for which Anglicanism from the first has stood. Our Church has always maintained the need of a reasonable faith, and always claimed the right to study and if necessary to restate that faith in accordance with the progress of human thought. She stands for a dynamic not a static religion, for freedom not for fetters ; and our hope is that, if we would be worthy children of the Church of England, we must here and now take up our birthright of liberty. We believe that, as men of moderate views learn to escape from the thraldom of a fictitious authority, they will recognise their unity more clearly, and will be able to treat more tolerantly and wisely such minor differences as arise over the varieties of ceremonial or

the niceties of doctrine. If once we reject bravely the hankering after certainty which seeks pathetically to satisfy itself by setting up an arbitrary court of final appeal, we shall be free to develop a greater latitude in our use of formularies and a wider sympathy with diversities of opinion. So and only so does it seem possible for our Church to become a united society, able to meet the varying needs of all peoples and languages, all classes and temperaments, able to adapt herself to changes in environment social or intellectual, able to realise her true life as a single body having many members, one in Spirit yet differing in office.

Yet if our liberty is not to degenerate into licence, we must make sure that the living influence of the Spirit of Jesus does not mean less to us than external authority, "the Law," does to its bondmen. Our greatest danger is that which confronted St. Paul and his converts, the danger of repudiating rashly and in the first flush of our freedom all the restraints, all the experience, of the past without due regard to their value or to the feelings of our brethren.

Plato was wise when he forbade the young to use dialectic, lest they behave like puppies and tear up everything that comes in their way : and his warning should be read and remembered by all youthful enthusiasts. It is so easy to criticise, and to urge drastic reforms as if they could be carried out casually by a meeting of Professors, or a synod of Bishops, or a committee of the Student Movement. A passion for renovation can seduce us from our allegiance to Christ and the gospel of love just as readily as a subservience to tradition. And if we start by breaking down carved work with axes and hammers, we shall probably have to build it up again with tears for our own vandalism and its marred beauty.

Any real reform must, I believe, be begun by way of a readjustment of emphasis, not of a restatement of belief. We must first work to secure the recognition and supremacy of Jesus in ourselves and in our world, and to focus upon Him all the energy that is now dissipated over ecclesiastical and doctrinal accretions, over sectarian factiousness and metaphysical refinements. In Him we shall

find our authority, an authority not derived from obedience to the infallibility of His recorded words or deeds (that would be to degrade Him to the level of a second Moses and to rob Him of His power to save), but secured through the surrender of ourselves to Him in love as persons to a Person, so that, our feelings and minds and wills being consecrated to His service, the Spirit of Truth may dwell in us and lead us into all truth.

Then perhaps we shall find that changes are unnecessary: for experience goes to show that those who start by propounding novelties and demanding new creeds commonly discover, as they come into closer touch with the Master, that the Catholic Faith is larger and less crude than they thought. Or, if not, if the old is not merely archaic but untrue, then in the needful changes we shall not be left unguided.

The Incarnation in Jesus is either the great delusion or the supreme fact of history: if we accept it,

> "our resting-place is found
> The C Major of this life."

On it must be based, from it must be built up, the whole harmony of our being. And its importance will lie not least in this, that it is not a fact alone, but a symbol, a seal, a sacrament—a symbol that denotes the eternal union of men with God, a seal that guarantees to them the sure hope of such union, a sacrament whereby it may even now be obtained. For the revelation of God to us is yet incomplete : its fulness and our fruition of it will only come when the Christ once born among men is formed and brought to birth in men, when all mankind is knit together into His body, wherein He shall return in glory.

LECTURE ONE

MAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

It is the business of religion to bridge the gulf between man and God, to satisfy the instincts and to answer the questions with which human beings have always confronted the universe. In so doing, religion naturally assumes a very wide variety of forms. Of these Christianity is beyond dispute the boldest and the most simple.

All the thinkers, all the saints, of the pre-Christian world had been pondering over the riddle of man's relation to the universal. They had devised elaborate cosmologies which should be ladders from earth to heaven. They had piled up mountains of books which should make the unknown knowable. They had invented manifold rites which should mitigate the wrath or gratify the vanity of

their divinities. They had in fact created a highly complicated medley of creeds and philosophies, cults and moralities, by which man might be brought into touch with God.

It must have appeared to an educated sceptic of the time of Augustus that everything possible had been tried, that by this multitude of theories the whole field of human speculation had been covered, that truth if discoverable must needs have been discovered. Suddenly there was propounded a new solution of the mystery, a solution so bold that the pious shrieked at its blasphemy, so simple that the wise smiled at its folly. It was maintained that the gulf had been spanned by an Incarnation, that the infinite had appeared in time and space, that God had become man. That this new God-man was an outcast member of an outcast people only added a touch of insolence to what seemed in any case preposterous. It is little wonder that the new sect was greeted with hatred and contempt.

Yet men were found willing to die for this absurdity; more wonderful still, by it they were helped to live. The testimony of the martyrs was startling enough—though mad-

men exist in every community. The spectacle of changed lives was more conclusive still—for love and joy and peace are seldom the fruits of madness, and, if they are, men will normally prefer them to sanity. So the scoffers of the Empire were compelled to take Christianity seriously. And, as they did so, they discovered that their scorn had been premature. For there was in the new religion, there was even in its amazing creed, a certain congruity, a certain satisfactoriness. After all it fitted in well with the scheme of things; it explained a mass of disjointed instincts; it solved a variety of riddles; it gave a unity and consistency to much that had before been chaotic and incomplete. And so, thanks firstly to the character of her saints and then to the learning of her doctors, the Church prevailed.

It was the duty and the delight of these doctors to explain in the terms of their own education the great facts of the history of Jesus, to interpret the new life in the light of the learning of the time. It is not necessary here to review their efforts or chronicle the very diverse theologies to which they gave

rise. Suffice it to say that this task has always been laid upon the Church. There can be no finality about it. Every new phase of human thought concerning the nature of God or man must sooner or later have its effect upon the doctrine of the God-man. Fresh discoveries in metaphysics will open up a new conception of God. Fresh discoveries in psychology or biology will render obsolete earlier accounts of the Incarnation. The characteristic ideas of each epoch are to be found reproduced in the belief of the Church of the time. If the Gospel is to be accepted by men, it must be preached to them in language which they can understand. We must see to it that we do not speak to them in "a tongue"—else the Idiotes will not be able to say Amen.

It is this necessity for a fresh interpretation which at once feeds the intellectual life of the Church and is the cause of her periodic unrest. She is constantly suffering from "growing pains," and with increasing years these have an unpleasant habit of becoming more severe and more dangerous. In the early centuries the young organism was plastic.

Change was rapid, but it was easy. Now there is less adaptability. Her bones have hardened: her sinews have lost their suppleness. Any alteration in her mode of life jars and convulses her whole system. Anything like sudden shock is seen to be gravely perilous. And so men begin to treat her as if she were a senile invalid to be kept under close restraint, to be moved delicately and with care, to be sheltered at all hazard from the winds of heaven, and the boisterous vitality of the young. It is true of the society, and it is true too often also of our individual belief. We wrap the poor thing up in cotton-wool and hide it away in a closet, as too fragile, too venerable, to be lightly handled. Our faith becomes anaemic through want of air and exercise. If it is to recover, we must surely use a certain ruthlessness; we must drag it out into the daylight and force it to recognise the new needs and meet the new problems of the time.

For at the moment we are in the middle of one of these epochs of change. That great movement of thought, which is labelled "scientific" because its characteristic method

was first applied in the sphere of physical science, has now invaded every realm of human activity. The practice of the laboratory, which submits all its data to strict analysis and searching criticism, has been carried into the study of literature and history; and its effects have been at first sight revolutionary. It is not my purpose here to attempt any survey of the general scope of this "new learning," though we shall have abundant instances of the application of its principles. In this lecture we must take the mass of detail for granted, and confine ourselves to the bare outline of the result as it affects theology.

What first confronts us is the fact that from the varied labours of the last century has arisen a conception of the nature of God, which, if not actually new, is at least radically different from that which has prevailed since the days of the Greek Fathers. We should have to go back to Origen if we wished to find any full anticipation of modern ideas. It is a fascinating task to take the writings of that richest product of Greek Christianity and study them in the light of our own time. A pretty complete parallel, save for some strik-

ing additions, can be found in him to that New Theology which for a space perplexed the orthodox of yesterday. His wide knowledge of all the phases of human thought, his unique gift of synthesis, his skill in employing the facts of one branch of study to illuminate the problems of another, and his freedom from the trammels of dogmatic formulae or ecclesiastical convention, enabled him to construct a theology which is always arresting and occasionally startlingly modern. Since his condemnation work of this quality has only appeared at rare intervals and under severe restraint. Succeeding ages had neither the ability nor the liberty to produce it, and the loss of Origenism to the Church is not the least of the tragedies of history. It is a loss which is likely to be repaired under the conditions of our time.

What then is this new conception of God? It is perhaps best to start any attempt to define it by laying down the general proposition that the divine nature exists under two totally distinct conditions. God is, must be, in one sense infinite, eternal, removed from the conditions of relativity, outside the

limitations of time and space, "the Father of lights with whom is no change nor shadow of turning." At the same time, so far as we can know Him, it is because He manifests Himself in and through creation; so that we can apprehend, not indeed Godhead itself, but Godhead as mediated through the objects of sense-perception: He is "testified to by the things that are made"; and certain of His attributes, certain of the qualities of His nature and the modes of His operation, can be discovered under the conditions in which we live. Between these two spheres of the divine existence there has been in the past, and is still, frequent confusion. In the interests of clear thinking they must be kept rigidly apart. Upon each of them the "modern" has something to say.

Under the first heading this something is simple. About the existence of God in His infinite aspect it is clear that we who are finite can conceive scarcely anything, and can hardly put that little into words. We can define Him as "that which was and is and is to come"; we might perhaps venture to apply to Him St. John's mystic definitions, "life"

and "light" and "love": but beyond that we can say nothing—and for an obvious reason. We here in time and space cannot conceive or define the nature of goodness or truth or beauty, in itself, or except in relation to its opposite. Goodness, except as the highest grade in a scale which rises from the lowest level of depravity through all the stages of bad and less bad, good and more good, transcends our powers of interpretation. Philosophers may infer the absolute from the relative: they have done so from Plato onwards. But there remains a great gulf fixed between the two spheres. Our minds, dependent for their concepts upon the data supplied by sense-perceptions, cannot cross it. We can apprehend the eternal, we cannot comprehend it. We shall be wise, if we recognise our limitations and refuse to make rash definitions.

Nevertheless what we can know of God on the eternal plane does surpass what we can say. Most men have to some extent, and some possess to a large degree, that mystic faculty which can rise outside time and space into consciousness of contact or communion

with the universal. There comes a flash of revelation, a moment when we are rapt out of our earthly selves into a region of calm and changelessness, where we feel that complexity is resolved into unity, where the discord of our problems and the contradictions of our logic are dissipated in a harmony which satisfies and convinces, though it does not explain. When we return to earth, we come possessed of a certainty of the oneness and, I think, of the rightness of things. We have felt and known the one, and in the light of that knowledge we can accept the tyranny of the many.

Such experience we may be capable of transmitting by a direct communication of it unspoken to others on a plane of consciousness which is below the level of formulated thought or word. That we can thus reveal to those with whom we are in sympathy something of our experience without the medium of speech is a fact to which most people can testify. But the extent to which such subconscious communication is possible cannot yet in the present state of psychological knowledge be exactly defined. However that

may be, it is obvious that the mystic apprehension of things eternal cannot be given precise intellectual expression. Our reason is earthbound. It can only think in terms of time and space; it can only interpret in words which are coined as images of an image, as shadows of a shade. All we can do is to assure ourselves that there exists a realm distinct from that in which we pass our incarnate life, a realm which we cannot define and yet in which we feel somehow that we are at home.

It is of the utmost importance that we should realise the value and the limitations of the evidence to be drawn from mysticism. It is precious to those who have shared in it, because of its convincing testimony to the incompleteness of the phenomenal, and to the underlying oneness of things. We learn to know in our flashes of illumination that this scene of change, this prison-house of time and space, is not the only or indeed the true condition of existence: we learn to believe that the irreconcilable dilemmas of our logic do, if we could visualise it, admit of synthesis. It is limited, because we cannot translate

into words what we have experienced in ecstasy, and cannot ourselves construct the synthesis which we know to exist. We have risen to the apprehension of infinity; we cannot bring the infinite back with us so as to handle it intellectually. The key to our problems is there: we cannot use it here. We know that there is an answer to our riddles: that answer cannot be given under the conditions of earthly life. Not the least useful of the lessons of such a glimpse of eternity is that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom. It ought to make us humbly willing to admit that here on earth we can have no finality, no secure resting-place. It ought to cure us of that dogmatism which is the most frequent and least excusable fault of the religious.

The importance of this distinction between the eternal and the temporal, between the static and the kinetic, becomes manifest as we remember how freely and fatally the two have been confused. We shall have to consider at some length the effects of such confusion on the understanding of the Incarnation, a sphere in which it was particularly prevalent.

For the moment a simpler instance may be mentioned. Religion, or at least religious people, have been often ready to maintain that they possess in their sacred books, or formulae, or traditions, something ultimate and immutable, something in fact which belongs not to time but to eternity. Now, if we admit, as it appears that we must, the inability of human reason or human language to comprehend or define the infinite, we see at once that such a claim is insupportable. That which is mediated by the conditions of existence in time and space cannot be complete or final. It may be very probable: it may be the closest approximation to truth of which human minds are capable: but it is not truth itself, and as such it cannot bring with it an authority of an absolute character. It is, I believe, self-evident that God in His eternal aspect cannot be qualified rigidly within the categories of our logic, that we cannot measure the universal with the reed of our finite intellects. If so, we are driven to conclude that in our records and creeds we are concerned only with God as mediated to us through phenomena, and, as we shall

see, in that case we have to consider not God only, but the medium through which the knowledge of Him is transmitted; and unless the medium is equal with God, it will be unable to present Him to us as He is.

To many people the frank confession that the Church has not got, and cannot offer, absolute certainty comes as something of a shock. When first it is made, they jump to the conclusion that the Christian cause has been betrayed, that all has been rendered insecure, that religion must indeed be in a parlous state if its professors dare not claim that its guidance is inerrant. They are perhaps tempted to exclaim that if they cannot have certainty they will have nothing: for we all love assurance—are indeed to some extent restless and unhappy until we find it. Yet on closer consideration, the confession does not amount to much. At least, if it applies to religion, it applies equally to all other human matters. We are not meant to lead lives of restfulness or happiness: else were heaven unnecessary. It is our heritage that we can dream of and yearn after peace: but in this land of our exile we live by hope

alone. The mystery of our mortal state is that we are set to strive after a goal unattainable, that we are travelling towards a horizon which ever removes as we progress towards it. And yet we must not stop or tarry—for that is death.

This need to go forward should console us for the absence of finality. Because we are not able to think in terms of eternity, that is no excuse for refusing to think at all. While we are men living under the conditions of humanity, it behoves us to play the man to the fullest extent. If we can only see as in a glass darkly, we shall not mend matters by shutting our eyes. If we know only in part, lack of knowledge must be no pretext for sloth or panic. We are men, not gods nor angels—men allowed in rare moments of inspiration to know that there is a state of existence other than ours, but none the less ordained to work out our lives in faith and not by sight.

It is indeed possible, theoretically at least, that our ideas and ideals have no relation to ultimate verities. What we think good may be on another plane bad, black may be white,

all our values may be false. It is possible, but no sane man treats the possibility as a serious one. Even if we knew that the inhabitants of Mars, or of heaven, possessed standards diametrically opposed to ours, we should still have to act according to our highest lights as dwellers upon earth. Even if the universe be a joke and a mockery, we must still take it seriously and do our best. Such suggestions are after all merely silly; for all human effort, secular as well as religious, does proceed on the assumption that progress means a going forward not a going back, that what we call good is really and eternally good, that in fact man is made after the image of God. To deny this (though we assume but cannot prove it) would be to upset not only theology but all human thought and aspiration. All we need to realise is that there can be no demonstration, no complete assurance, as to the nature of infinity; that our minds are dependent upon sense-perceptions, and our words coined from this finite world; that the highest to which we can attain is not absolute goodness, truth, or beauty, but only the fullest conception of them that men

can form. When we come to consider anthropomorphism and the possibility of an incarnation of the divine, we shall find that this conclusion is of the highest value. For if we could realise God in His infinity, there would have been no need for Him to reveal Himself in Jesus. As soon as we admit that we can only conceive Him as mediated to us through the objects of our human senses, then at once it becomes plain that the supreme revelation of Him to us will come, must come, through the perfect man. The relation of this perfect man to the eternal God may remain inscrutable: his religious value will none the less be supreme, and for us incarnate beings complete. The ancient sneers of Xenophanes that if the horses had a god they would describe him as the noblest of horses, or of Celsus who likens the Christians to the frogs of the pond worshipping a frog-deity, lose their sting: we can accept and even glory in them. For both we and our critics can after all only think and speak in terms of our own nature: we at least are not ashamed to confess it; and the laugh is on our side.

"God through the dark has set the Light of Life,
With witness for Himself, the Word of God,
To be among us Man, with human heart,
And human language, thus interpreting
The One great Will incomprehensible,
Only so far as we in human life
Are able to receive it; men as men
Can reach no higher than the Son of God,
The perfect Head and Pattern of mankind."[1]

So far therefore our conclusion must be that the God of religion, whom Jesus taught us to call "our Father," represents the Godhead in a different sphere from that in which we speak of Him as the "Father of lights with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning." "We worship that we do know," and anyone who has ever tried to pray to the "Absolute" will have discovered that the attempt is unsatisfying.

Vastly more important for us is the second condition under which God exists, as mediated in and through His creation, as "testified to by the things that are made." It is in regard to this that the scientific movement has produced its most marked effects. And in order to understand clearly the main points in the

[1] Mrs. Hamilton King, *The Disciples, Ugo Bassi*, iii.

modern conception, we will outline a type of thought which was not long ago almost universal, and is still far too common.

Most of us, I suppose, were brought up to think of God as an awful potentate, the King of kings, enthroned above in heaven, and watching from thence with mingled kindliness and severity the actions of His creatures. On the whole He allowed men a free scope. They were given certain recognised rules of conduct, certain definite means of grace, and were encouraged to submit their difficulties to Him in prayers, which He had promised to answer. At great crises in the history of the world or of individuals God would upset the normal course of events by revealing Himself directly in His own person. The King would issue a special decree, confer an extraordinary blessing, execute a signal judgment. These abnormal manifestations of the sovereign will were particularly to be found in the great catastrophes, or miracles, which violated or seemed to violate the laws of nature. We accepted it as a privilege of omnipotence that the lawgiver could with impunity disregard His own ordinances. Indeed His activity was

so largely localised in these supernatural events that by force of contrast He was nearly excluded from the natural order. Sometimes it almost appeared as if the supernatural could be equated with the divine, and the natural degraded to the level of a mere machine running automatically and only valuable because it supplied a field for the operations of a God external to it.

Our idea of inspiration was similarly based upon a monarchical conception of deity. The King sent His Spirit arbitrarily at certain times upon certain individuals. They were thus overruled by a power acting upon them from without. Their words and actions were dictated to them, so that they became passive recipients like the subjects of a mesmerist. Cases of this complete indwelling were however rare—confined in fact to the authors of the canonical scriptures, with the popes as self-selected candidates for a similar exalted position. Yet we used the same metaphors to explain God's dealings with ourselves. There too He acted by means of direct decrees such as ruler or judge would give, decrees coming to us independently of ourselves and

addressed rather to our minds and wills than to our hearts. Religion was interpreted in terms of duty, the duty of obedience, and not of love which loves to obey.

To many this account will no doubt seem a caricature. It is far from my wish to join the chorus of those who since Huxley have covered such ideas with an easy ridicule. For indeed there is perhaps as much truth in them as can be conveyed by earthly imagery. Only we must remember that any one category of similes is insufficient to represent Godhead, and if exclusively used will produce a travesty more false than a downright lie. As soon as we state this monarchical notion of God, we feel that it is inadequate, unworthy, untrue: but to me at least, and I suppose to the majority of believers, these ideas are those to which we were brought up, and which still supply the background for our usual thoughts about God. Gradually perhaps a truer, because more balanced, portrait of Him will be possible: but so long as our children are taught their religion from a Catechism which has little to say about Christianity and less about Christ, and use a prayer-book unre-

vised since the disappearance of the divine right of kings, there does not seem much hope of change. It only needs those crude notions of God and heaven which prevail in Church art, and are instilled into us by the sensuous materialism of favourite hymns, to complete our training in religious nonsense.

It is worth while to start with this popular conception of the scope and method of God's action in the world, because it is in complete contrast to that which most of us nowadays come to hold. Instead of the transcendence we lay stress on the immanence of the Godhead, instead of spasmodic and arbitrary actions we ascribe to Him consistency and continuity, instead of a barrier between natural and supernatural we refuse to allow even a distinction. It may be partly reaction: the new may well lack certain elements which gave value to the old: we may soon have to restore what we now reject. But at least those of us who have taken new lamps for old do feel that we have profited by the exchange, and that the new gives a clearer light to see by.

The chief result of the scientific movement

has been to lay stress upon the inherent oneness and regularity of the natural order. In the physical world no student doubts the general truth of the theory of Evolution, that life is to be represented as a chain, in which the various forms or species are links, and which stretches unbroken from amoeba to man. Experts dispute warmly as to the method by which fresh links are produced; they are agreed in accepting belief in a general and orderly development from lower to higher organisms, from the simple to the complex. So it is too in historical or literary research. The old method whereby characters or periods were treated in isolation as separate units has been laid aside. Instead we are taught to trace the gradual unfolding of movements, and to regard facts and individuals only as embodying and exemplifying general principles. In each subject we are concerned with the mind of man rather than of men, and though it may be hard to classify or systematise certain types of wayward genius, our object is to fit together all the pieces of the mosaic and to see the whole of human effort as a thing ordered and complete. Everywhere

there is the same purpose in our studies —to see things entire, to get beneath the mass of superficial contradictions, and to discover from our study of the details the underlying laws which determine the sequence of cause and effect.

If we take consistency and continuity as the dominant features of the modern outlook upon nature, we shall find them equally emphasised in our portrayal of nature's God. We reject at once as at variance with our whole position any theology which ascribes to the deity a spasmodic or partial activity. He must be a God of order not of chaos. He cannot be confined to, or excluded from, any corner of His universe. His revelation of Himself must be not only coextensive with the whole field of our experience, but must also bear those marks of uniformity and stability which we find in the laws of nature. Θεὸς ἀεὶ γεωμετρεῖ, said Plato, and the modern student unreservedly endorses the axiom.

No doubt to most people this will seem familiar and obvious. None of us, even in time of war, are content to worship knowingly a tribal or national deity: none of us

could seriously accept a God whose purpose was changeable and whose actions were haphazard. At the same time, obvious as it may be, many of the opinions which have dominated theology and are current in our pulpits do flatly deny to God these attributes of consistency and continuity. We still cling fondly to the old distinction between natural and supernatural: that distinction must go. We still speak of unexpected disaster as the "act of God": such a phrase is meaningless. Instances of the importance of our conclusion might be largely cited: two will suffice. The belief in God's consistency overthrows at once that very prevalent view of the Incarnation which regards it as a remedy for the Fall, as a kind of afterthought, a desperate expedient devised to meet a desperate position. To reconcile God's changeless purpose with human freedom and explain how it is that man can apparently resist and thwart God may be beyond the powers of our logic. But we cannot be content to solve the dilemma by supposing that God is perpetually being constrained to the use of sudden changes of policy, or by admitting that our actions are

outside His plan. So too the belief in His continuity forbids us to accept an interpretation of the sacraments which confines His presence exclusively to a special place or time, or represents that presence as unique not in degree but in kind. It would also make it difficult for us to accept a doctrine of the Incarnation which insisted that the indwelling in Jesus took place in a method different from that whereby God appears in the saints: but with this we shall have to deal later.

We conclude therefore that God, if He is revealed at all, must be revealed in everything, must be mediated to us by everything: and that the method of this revelation will be conditioned by definite and discoverable principles. Our next task is to enquire into these conditions. If the whole of creation is in some sense the self-expression of God's nature, how is it that our comprehension of Him is so limited? Why is it that we are so slow to receive what He is everywhere ready to bestow?

Two main conditions have to be fulfilled if we are to be brought into touch with God:

two great facts determine the extent to which we can know Him. These two are, firstly the ability of the particular medium to receive and transmit the knowledge of Him, and secondly the ability of the recipient to accept the knowledge thus transmitted. The limitations of either of these will destroy the possibility of a full revelation. If the mirror which reflects God to me is broken or distorted, I cannot see His clear light in it: even if the light be duly reflected, I can still close my eyes. We will take these two separately.

In the first place, although all things and all people are potentially able to mediate the divine, it is plain that the extent to which they actually do so varies to an extreme degree. In the sphere of nature this is perhaps less noticeable than elsewhere. Every moment the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork; every moment the morning stars are singing together and all the sons of God shout for joy. We feel that it is all very good, that an endless Benedicite is ever rising from it all: and although to each of us some favourite aspect, sunset or woodland, bird

or flower, will appeal most readily, we confess that this is due to our own dulness and not to any defect in the medium. In the works of man and in human characters, the limitations of the medium are notable enough. We all feel that certain objects and actions are specially fitted to bring before us the nearness of God. The dignity of a great cathedral or the observance of a time-honoured rite is inevitably connected with thoughts of Him—thoughts which are as inevitably dispelled by the squalor of a slum or the flippancy of a music-hall. Any deed which shows to us mankind at its best, any work which reflects high ideal or holy purpose mediates the divine to us. Wherever there is evidence of meanness or insincerity, self-betrayal or self-praise, of sin in fact, there and to that extent the medium is vitiated.

And as it is with the works of man, so it is with man himself;—and this we must examine with some care as it will help us to understand inspiration and even to interpret the nature of the Incarnation. If man is in the image of God, then potentially every one of us should reflect as in a glass the splendour of

the divine. As men it is our privilege to cleanse the mirror of our soul and to turn it so that heaven's own light can fall upon its surface. For all of us the mirror is blotched by sinful actions, distorted by pride: in all of us God's image is hard to trace. Yet in all of us, fitfully it may be and feebly, shines some ray of a brightness not wholly earth-born; and in One the light shines clear for all to see and if they will to walk by. "This is the judgment that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil."

Many other metaphors equally familiar could be used: the fact to be illustrated is plain enough. God has condescended to allow men to be His fellow-workers in this thing: through them as through other media He is willing to reveal Himself. Upon men rests the choice as to the extent of the revelation. As they live up to their own highest impulses and holiest inspirations, as they become god-like, the possibility is enhanced: every concession to sin, every failure, every weakness restricts it. "Blessed are the pure in

heart," said Jesus, "for they shall see God";

> "Through such souls alone
> God stooping shows sufficient of His light
> For us i' the dark to rise by."

If we apply this to the question of inspiration, we shall find a convincing proof of its truth. No man, whatever his views on the subject, will contend that the vision of God possessed by Ecclesiastes is equal to that contained in the Fourth Gospel. The two authors are wholly different not only in spiritual insight but in their ability to express what they see; and if God is one, then it is plain that two seers, if they differ, cannot both portray Him fully as He is. So it is in every case. The value of every writer will depend upon his possession of two great gifts—firstly the eyes to behold, and secondly the tongue to tell. If he falls short in either respect, then to that extent we shall be less helped by his writings; to that extent they will tell us less about God. When we put haloes round the heads of the saints and thereby separate them off from other mortals, we are actually defeating our own chances

of learning their message. If we treat St. James and St. Paul as identical in character and outlook, we are naturally dismayed when we find that they contradict one another. But when we admit that they differ, we open the door inevitably to the fullest criticism of their writings. It becomes clear that if we are to follow their teaching, we must find out as precisely as we can how far they are fitted to be our teachers. We must decipher their characters, so as to know the strength and weakness of their vision: we must appraise their intellects, so as to estimate the relation between the facts which they describe and the language which they employ: and we must study the circumstances of each writing, so as to discover how far it applies to the needs of our own time. If we do this honestly, we shall find much that is unexpectedly human in them—outbursts of temper, signs of misunderstanding, evidences of weakness—and much that is plainly contemporary and for us meaningless in their works—symbolism to which we have lost the key, problems to which they give impossible solutions, facts on which they are palpably misinformed.

We may seem for a time to be losing confidence. We may regret that we cannot any longer use an arbitrarily chosen text to foreclose every argument. Those of us who have been brought up to accept our Bible as infallible, will no doubt feel at first that the mainstay of our security is gone. But the change is not all for the worse. As we realise the limitations of their outlook and vocabulary, and the conditions under which they wrote, we shall be filled with wonder. Their very failings will be a source of comfort and of glorying. We shall learn to be deeply thankful that God has hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes. Their very difficulties will be a challenge and a warning. We shall remember that to us with our advantages applies the saying, "To whom much is given, from him shall much be required." Their writings will humble and inspire us, without ceasing to teach. Indeed in this matter of teaching the change will bring us rich gain. How can we hope to meet the needs of our new social order, if we draw our remedies blindly from writings directed to folks whose whole

status was different? How can we take St. Paul's precepts, intended for the slaves and petty tradesmen of a pagan empire, and apply them unmodified to the ruling classes of a Christian land? Surely our Church is not strengthened in its attitude towards women by adhering to the notion that sin came through Eve, or to the directions of an apostle who was permeated by that belief. The practical disadvantages of a literal acceptance of Holy Writ are nearly as great as its intellectual difficulties. Both enforce the conclusion to which our general understanding of the divine method has led us. We are forced to admit that with the authors of Scripture as with all other sons of men, the revelation of God is conditioned by the "godliness" of him that receives it.

And as it is with the Bible, so too is it with the Church. Creeds and Councils must be judged in exactly the same way. Where men of saintly lives and brilliant minds have given us the fruits of their study of things divine, we cannot lightly reject so precious a gift. But because they were men of like passions with us, men limited by the circum-

stances of their age and the shortcomings inherent in fallen humanity, we cannot accept their authority as final. Even the fact that multitudes of their successors have approved and employed their words, though it warns us earnestly against ill-considered rejection, cannot confer more than a relative sanction. The *communis sensus fidelium*, though perhaps the strongest of all testimonies to religious truth, consists only of the assent of the mass of human believers. God works through men from within, not upon them from without. Our creeds define Him as He appears to human minds and can be described by human lips; they do not reveal Him as He is. We may say of them without hesitation as we say of the scriptures, that they are all "inspired of God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction." But we must say the same of every writing whose author has set out with clean hands and a pure heart, in sincerity and humility, to seek after God and to show to his fellow-seekers what he has found.

After all it is probably from our own selves that we can most simply understand how

God makes Himself known. We all have some glimpses of Him, some scraps of revelation, some atoms of experience. He that asks, to him shall be given; he that seeks, finds; to him that knocketh, to each one of us as well as to prophet and evangelist, saint and doctor, the gate of heaven is opened. We know only too well how fitful is our vision of holy things; we know how sins destroy and prejudices distort. But we know enough already to realise this, that it is our duty, our privilege, and our responsibility, to lift up the eyes of our soul to heaven, to see and, if it may be, to proclaim in this our day new depths of the divine. And according to our faith, according to the devotion of our hearts and the holiness of our lives, it shall be done unto us. For this is God's plan, that He will not and, if we dare say it, cannot show more than human eyes can see, tell more than human ears can hear, teach more than human minds can grasp.

The second condition that must be satisfied, if a revelation of God is to be recognised, does not differ essentially from the first: for each of them arises from the imperfections

of men. Just as the seer's vision is impaired by defective eyesight, so the value of his description of it will be lost by the blind, whether their blindness is voluntary or no. Every teacher must assume a certain degree of sympathy and intelligence in his hearers. Unless they have sufficient experience of the subject to recognise the meaning of his words and the cogency of his appeal, he will find his results disappointing.

This needs only to be stated: it is the merest commonplace. Yet critics and students of religion have often neglected it. A popular line of attack against the divinity of Jesus —that indeed which gave rise to the *Hibbert Journal's* volume *Jesus or Christ*—springs from the fact that He said nothing about the wonders of science and little about the social and political problems which interest our generation. Such an attack seems to overlook the elementary fact that if God did appear in the flesh He would necessarily have to adapt His teaching to the outlook and intelligence of His contemporaries. It is arguable, even if not highly probable, that Jesus said many things which fell upon deaf

ears. Considering the character of His followers, it is amazing that they accepted as much as they did: it is not surprising that we can find signs of misunderstanding and even alteration of His words: it is unquestionable that He tested their capacity to its uttermost. This necessity laid upon Jesus is one that all students of theology must bear in mind. Far too little allowance is usually made for the prejudices and limitations of His biographers. In the case of the First and Fourth Gospels critics have been quick to urge that the record has been edited to subserve a particular purpose. Even conservative theologians admit that "St. Matthew" allowed his interest in the fulfilment of prophecy to lead him into exaggerations, and that "St. John's" narrative is coloured by the experiences of a life of discipleship. But is it not equally plain that we must estimate and make allowance for the personal equation of the author just as carefully in the case of St. Mark? Is it not at least possible that the familiarity with current eschatological ideas which appears in the records of the first two Gospels may be due not to

Christ but to His Jewish evangelists? In any case the factor is an important one.

It is the fact of this diversity in our ability to receive the revelation of God that destroys all present possibility of uniformity in religious faith or practice. That "one man's meat is another man's poison" is a truism which is unfortunately true. As we have seen, the extent to which Nature can speak to us of God depends entirely on our sympathy with her. The more we keep our instincts fresh and receptive, the less do we doubt that behind all, in all, is something more than all. Creation is indeed God's great parable, an earthly story with a heavenly meaning, God's great sacrament, an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace; and those that live simply and sincerely can best appreciate and use it. To a Wordsworth or a Whitman it is all a mystery, an open secret. To most of us fire and wind and earthquake will always bring thoughts "too deep for tears." To each of us something has this peculiar power: to each there come moments when "every common bush" is visibly "ablaze with God." Even those

for whom the pageant of summer is meaningless may find a similar inspiration in the intense splendour of a great feat of arms, or, like McAndrew, in the ordered working of a huge machine. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

So too it is in our intercourse with one another. One man will kindle our souls into a consuming flame: a second, perhaps equally full of divine fervour, will leave us cold. However sympathetic the preacher, certain of his audience will inevitably be unmoved. Therein is the whole tragedy of a system of fixed incumbencies, the whole case for a greater facility of exchange. Similarly with the externals of worship, it is unavoidable, so long as men are temperamentally different, that the atmosphere of a religious service will influence them in different ways. No doubt certain forms long tested by time will prove acceptable to the majority: for most of us prefer what is familiar and dignified. Nevertheless we must not forget that there are and will be persons who are blind to the beauty of a great cathedral service and who yet reveal rich stores of spiritual enthusiasm in

a whitewashed meeting-house. There is the whole failure of a fixed ritual, the whole need for elasticity in our formularies. Nor is there a difference in the sphere of doctrine. Truth comes to us as individuals ; our understanding of it must needs be individual. Even if we shake off the tyranny of catch-phrases and refuse to take party cries at their face-value, there will still be certain broad lines of cleavage between us. That these tend to disappear as we sincerely follow the guidance of our experience, is due to the fact that we are all men, and, when we get deep enough, very much alike. Even then, though experience commonly unites, the definition of it is always liable to divide. No two of us would describe the same sunrise identically : much less are we likely to agree when the object to be described is God. Only when our spirits are knit together by love for Him and love for one another can we hope to be of one mind. Theology constructed except under that condition stands foredoomed to failure.

It appears therefore that the first principles of our conception of God would be these : that in His eternal nature He is unknowable

save by direct apprehension, the ecstatic vision of the mystics : that this apprehension, though possibly it may be communicated to others subconsciously, cannot be given intellectual definition : that He is nevertheless manifested indirectly through the medium of creation, from the study of which we can discover certain laws of the divine operation, and especially through men, who are capable to some extent of a knowledge of God both direct and indirect : that this knowledge will vary in proportion to the "godliness" of the individual, and that in any case the intellectual explanation of it will be confined within the limitations of human thought and language : finally that the acceptability of the knowledge thus received and explained will depend on the fitness of the recipient.

To most people this conclusion will seem the veriest commonplace—a truism so familiar that its bare statement would have sufficed. My excuse for emphasising it at such length must be, that by it are supplied the postulates for any study of the Incarnation, and also that, familiar though it is, the corollaries of it are by no means accepted or acceptable

among the orthodox. Very large numbers of our Anglican clergy are at present in a state of the most complete confusion over it. They are ready enough to reject crudely supernatural ideas and to endorse conclusions such as we have stated: but they refuse to press these conclusions to their logical issue, or to apply them to the vexed questions of the faith. Both Catholics and Evangelicals (and the latter especially) are finding themselves constrained to make concessions to modern literary and historical criticism; but are too often unwilling to admit the consequent necessity for a complete change of ground. They cling pathetically to the traditional positions which their own concessions have rendered untenable, insisting all the time that the fragments which remain are still secure, that further withdrawal would be gross treason, and that no other strongholds save these tottering ruins remain for the faithful.

Before we conclude this lecture, we will refer briefly to a subject in which this mental confusion is notably prominent, and which excellently illustrates both our conception of

God and our method of enquiry, the subject of miracles.

We may notice at once that there are two points of view with which modern students can have little sympathy. To some minds it seems to be satisfactory to quote the much misused text that "with God all things are possible," and then to explain the lack of recent miracles on some theory of the dispensations of divine working. To others Hume's dictum that miracles do not happen is taken to have closed the question altogether. Each of these, stated by itself, is an *a priori* assumption—the latter even more so than the former—and to accept either of them without evidence is to be false to the whole scientific method. We must begin our study not with a dogma, either for or against the miraculous, but with an investigation of the evidence in the light of our whole knowledge of God's action in the world. Until we have done this, we must needs suspend judgment: when we have done it, we may be in a position to establish a hypothesis.

In these lectures a full or detailed treatment

of particular examples of the miraculous cannot be attempted. All we can do is to see how far our conception of God is adequate to cover the facts and able to help us towards an explanation of them. To do so, let us apply the postulates to which we have been led.

We have seen that human descriptions of any event can only be accepted or estimated after due attention has been paid to the contemporary meaning of the words actually used, to the author's preconceptions and the likelihood of his being a reliable witness, and to his opportunities of arriving at a true knowledge of the specific event. We must in fact cross-examine the documents, and to do so must put ourselves, if we can, into an impartial attitude. When all this has been done, we shall find beyond doubt that certain events commonly reckoned miracles were not in fact reported as such by the writers who narrate them, subsequent ages having read into the story an element which was not necessarily part of the original occurrence. In other cases we shall have reason to think that the writer through bias or imperfect

knowledge has given a miraculous interpretation to events capable of being explained naturally. In yet other cases we shall observe that the writer was not an eye-witness, and shall feel compelled to reject his evidence for lack of corroborative and first-hand testimony. Instances of all these classes are frequent, and a certain number of the recorded miracles can be set aside on these grounds. But, when this has been done, there remains, especially in the life of our Lord and His immediate followers, a number of occurrences which are recorded on the strongest evidence and cannot be explained on any theory of misinterpretation or undue credulity—unless our commonsense and critical faculties have been so distorted by prejudices that we are prepared to write down all the canonical authors as either fools or knaves.

In the case of these events—such events as the resurrection, where the contemporary and subsequent testimony alike of writers and results is most striking, or as works of healing, for which there is a convincing multitude of proofs—we must bear in mind a second

postulate. It is noticeable that these miracles are all ascribed to a Person or persons of quite unprecedented spiritual and psychic power. Whatever we think about creeds and dogmas, few of us will dispute the fact that Jesus and His disciples were men uniquely fitted to reveal God; men whose lives call out our admiration; men who obviously exercised a remarkable influence by reason of their high spirituality. Few people to-day deny or dispute the vast potencies of the human will, the subtle but compelling interaction of human personalities. Psychology is still far from being an exact science: but the whole burden of recent research is in favour of the belief that we, even the least of us, are greater than we know. In such matters as the transference of knowledge by channels other than those of the senses, or as the power of suggestion to influence or even to heal disease, there is being collected a mass of data from reliable observations and experiments. Students of psychic research will admit that, though the ability to exert influence in these directions is shared to some degree by all or most of us, yet it is in certain

experts that it appears at its richest. It seems to me completely fair to claim, with all emphasis, that modern psychology compels us to allow that the miracles of Jesus and to a lesser degree those of His followers are the reasonable, the natural, the inevitable, accompaniment of lives of unique exaltation, purity, and power. It should come as a surprise to us if such personalities had not exerted a control over others or an influence over matter. When higher spirits than ours enter into this sphere, higher laws will be revealed: to unprecedented persons unprecedented conditions will apply: the claim that Jesus cannot have wrought deeds of power or risen from the dead can only be made if we deny His uniqueness, and presume to equate Him with others or ourselves. We can see enough from the records of lesser men to feel that His signs are such as we should expect, such as would properly belong to His nature. They are not the violation of law, but the expression of it as it affects a personality unique in degree, if not in kind: they are events supra-normal indeed but not abnormal, supernatural not unnatural: they

do not upset our conclusion as to the consistency of God's method, but are part and a rich part of His revelation of Himself through and in time and space.

LECTURE TWO

THE ONENESS OF JESUS

In our first lecture we laid down certain broad principles which characterise the modern conception of God. In this and the following lectures we shall consider the nature of Jesus, the problem of the Incarnation, along similar lines, examining firstly in what respects the creeds and doctrines of traditional Christology are inadequate to our present needs, secondly from what sources the student can learn about the historic founder of the faith, and thirdly to what doctrinal position his studies will enable him to assent. In the present lecture our subject is mainly historical, a brief summary and discussion of the theology of the Incarnation, so far as it is contained in the formularies of the Catholic Church. Then we shall be free to grapple directly

with the great question, "What think ye of Christ?"

Just as in our treatment of the knowledge of God we started with an outline of the popular conception, so now we commence with a statement of the orthodox position. That this with its insistence upon a dual sphere of consciousness in the one Christ and particularly with its belief in the "two wills" is exceedingly hard for us nowadays to accept, is painfully clear. Most recent writers frankly abandon the attempt to reconcile traditional dogmas with the outlook of to-day. Even if they do not admit the need for a complete restatement, they refuse to accept the logical consequences of the metaphysics of Chalcedon. So stalwart a champion of rigid orthodoxy as the present Bishop of Zanzibar, in his great and most helpful book *The One Christ*, has patently failed to interpret the old so as to bring it into harmony with the new, to make room for two wills in the one Christ: that he has recourse to unworthy quibbles in order to escape the admission of his failure is the penalty which must be paid for loving Catholicism more than truth. Under what

circumstances and for what reasons has this dilemma between old and new arisen ?

If we would have a clear notion of the conditions under which the creeds were drawn up, it must never be forgotten that theology is only a side-product of Christianity. Christ came to reveal a new way of life, to summon men to repentance, to preach to them the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God, and to found among them a society which should enrol the members of that Kingdom throughout the world. His object seems to have been religious and practical : only incidentally does He touch upon doctrine or define His own place in the scheme of things. For the most part He was His own authority, His own testimonial. Wherever He does emphasise His own claims upon men or His own relationship to God, He does so for a religious and not a theological reason. He is concerned with persons not with ideas.

Yet although there is little in the Synoptists' record which formulates any Christian theology, it is of course abundantly plain that Jesus was Himself conscious of a unique nearness to His Father, and that His followers

came to accept this in full. Sayings such as that in His early biographer, "No man knoweth the Son save the Father, and no man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him" (whatever be its original form), supported by such hints at His special prerogative as are contained in His parable of the Wicked Husbandmen or His question to the Scribes about the Messiah, together with the blasphemy charge at His trial, proclaimed to those who believed in Him the message which the sanctity and power of His life had led them to expect. In spite of all their national prejudices these men, for whom the name of God was too sacred to be spoken, and who would have faced torment rather than recognise the deification of Caligula, were wholly sure and proud to proclaim that this Jesus was God and Lord, "defined signally to be Son of God by the fact of the resurrection and in accordance with the holiness of His life." In Him they had found all that man needs to find. Nothing could shake the firmness of their assurance. The first commandment might or might not be reconcilable with

their new knowledge: that mattered little to them; for they had seen and believed. They were men who had indeed been led out of darkness into light: they welcomed the light and walked in it, without stopping to enquire too pedantically into its quality.

And at first this simple gospel, that in Jesus somehow, in Jesus whatever His precise relation to God, was contained a new way for men, and the changed lives of its evangelists, their love and joy, their boldness and self-sacrifice, their steadfastness and peace, prevailed. The *ipse dixit* of the eyewitness, "We have seen and do testify," was accepted. Converts were contented with the plain facts that this life which they desired, these virtues which they beheld, were bound up with belief in and love for Jesus, crucified, risen, glorified. So it is that the earliest writings are startlingly free from theology, that even St. Paul, whose trained intellect and Jewish upbringing constantly brought him face to face with the problem of the nature of Christ, is willing to leave it scarcely touched, to take the solution almost for granted, and to devote his efforts to the practical consequences which follow

from that solution. He had seen a new vision of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and it was enough. This man, who had in his nature all the subtlety, all the sophistry of a professional theologian, would not waste his time upon theology.

Indeed it was not until the passing of the first generation of Christians that the need for systematic doctrine became apparent. As the eyewitnesses were removed, disputings arose and hard questions were asked. Intellectual methods had to be employed in order to enforce the truth whereof the testimony of apostolic lives had carried immediate conviction. Peter could say "I know," and men would accept: Timothy must condescend to argue and explain. We may regret the necessity and may rebel against the dogmatism to which it gave rise; but, so long as men are men, their religion must always have its intellectual as well as its practical and its emotional sides.

The fact that theology was gradually developed to meet the attacks of opponents and to answer the enquiries of converts is of some importance. Christians did not set out to

construct a scheme of doctrine under detached or academic conditions: their beliefs were not formulated in the abstract. Rather did they grow definite gradually as new questions were propounded or new criticisms developed. In consequence, all early theology is apologetic in character, concerned with precise local and occasional needs, and not attempting to cover the whole field at once or consistently. From this circumstance the early thinkers draw both their strength and their weakness. On the one hand, they are saved from the danger of a vague generalising by being in perpetual contact with actual experience: their teaching, whatever its defects, is at least adapted to meet practical issues: it is no mere theorising in the void. On the other hand, they are constrained to take as much from their opponents as they can, to accept the outlook and ideas of their converts whenever possible, and to give their teaching the form which will be most readily understood and appreciated. This often leads them into borrowing too freely from the conceptions of pagan hearers, into being content to build a Christian superstructure upon a pagan basis, in a word into compromise.

Before we proceed, it is well to lay special stress on this point: for it explains and in so doing justifies the failure of early thinkers. The students and critics of the Fathers are far too apt to follow Dr. Harnack's method, and to judge the works of Alexandrian or Antiochene scholars as if they were modern professors of theology, condemning them without mercy for errors which have only appeared during the passage of centuries. We may feel grave doubt about accepting the verdict of Chalcedon: it is obviously not the form of words which a conclave of the twentieth century would produce. But before we sneer at it as proving the "bankruptcy of Greek theology," we must remember the particular crisis which loomed before it. We should be less inclined to be hard upon Leo if we studied his difficulties from his own standpoint, with a Church crying for strong guidance and a final decision, and an Empire at whose gate was heard the thunder of Attila the Hun. The survival of Christianity is the vindication of his policy.

To return to our history: before the first generation had wholly passed away, there

had been written a book which seems almost entirely free from these apologetic tendencies and which contains the purest attempt ever made to interpret Christianity in the light of its own great spirit. The Fourth Gospel, whoever its author, whatever its strict historical value, has this unique quality, that it has developed the fact of Jesus in its bearing upon those large problems with which systematic theology is concerned, and has done so without compromise and with an originality and insight which marks the writer as the richest heir of his Master's mind. Such attempts as have been made to trace parallels between it and any contemporary movement, Jewish or Greek, Gnosticism or the Mystery religions, have failed to establish satisfactory evidence of connection. Great as are the difficulties in accepting the traditional account of this Gospel, all who study it must feel that it represents the richest interpretation of the new faith, the most illuminating commentary on the meaning of Jesus, the most searching revelation of the deep things of God. Unless it be indeed the work of the beloved disciple, it is exceedingly hard to

understand how it came to be written. That so full a spring of inspiration arose from another source than Jesus, and arose in one who, if not a deliberate forger, at least dared to assume a relationship with the Master to which he had no strict right, is almost unthinkable. The book is its own testimony. If only Christians had been able to receive and build upon this Gospel, love's great tribute to Love incarnate, they might have escaped from the perplexities of metaphysics and the formalism of ecclesiastical machinery. For here is God as the mystic knows Him, as Jesus must surely have known Him: here is the key which unlocks for us the hidden meaning of much that would else seem superficial and uninspiring in the accounts of the Synoptists, of much that is in itself arid and unedifying in the controversies of St. Paul: here is a background against which Jesus and His Church stand out in their true perspective and relationship: here is a scheme of thought which in its emphasis on love gives us an adequate picture of God, a consistent account of His operations, a sufficient incentive to call out our highest efforts, and

an unfaltering guide to lead those efforts to their goal. Theology had been given a noble starting-point: the right lines had been laid down. Unfortunately the Fathers, though they fully appreciated the religious value of St. John, were so pre-occupied with the "Logos" of the prologue that they paid little heed to the doctrinal teaching of the book as a whole and used it only in isolated verses.

The contrast between it and the writings of the second century reveals most plainly that there are two ways in which we can approach the problem of the Incarnation. The first starts with Jesus Christ, considers His actions as they were known among men, and from them and them alone derives a conception of God. It accepts the claim that "no man cometh to the Father but by Me" and that "if ye had known Me, ye would have known My Father also." It refuses to look for the divine except as revealed in Jesus. And its result is a theology from which non-Christian elements are excluded. This is St. John's way—the way of the Christian religion. The second starts with a conception of God derived from the general instincts of mankind,

or from the Old Testament, or from pagan philosophy, a conception either crude and primitive or vague and abstract and in neither case specifically Christian, applies this preconceived notion to the historic Jesus, and interprets the nature of the Incarnation from this standpoint. It starts not with Jesus but with God, and tends to substitute for the central figure of our Gospels a portrait which is distorted by presuppositions out of all likeness to the historic original, and compacted of features hopelessly irreconcilable. This is unhappily the way of the Fathers, of the creeds, and of traditional orthodoxy—the way of the Church's theology. Nothing is more essential than that we should get back to the former of these methods, that we should make our dogmatic system really Christ-centred, that we should bring it back to the historic Jesus and be content to learn of Him what He has to teach us of His Father and of His world.

As we have seen it was the need of an individual apologetic that led the Church away from St. John into this region of compromise and controversy. So soon as Chris-

tianity spread beyond the borders of Palestine, it was brought into living touch with races whose language and ideas differed widely. There sprang up in consequence several distinct types of Christian thought and practice, and each of these displays a characteristic doctrine of the Incarnation.

The Jew came to his Messiah as to the last and greatest of those messengers whom Jehovah had sent to His people. Jesus was, as we see Him in the first Gospel, the Son of David, the successor and reconciler of Moses and Elijah, in whom both law and prophets found their fulfilment. His Godhead was naturally interpreted in terms of an indwelling of the divine: the Spirit of the Lord had come upon Him, and had made His manhood its habitation, had inspired Him to give a new code, a new vision, to men. In its lowest form this belief sees in Jesus a mere man; in its highest it insists strongly upon the reality of His humanity, and has difficulty in accepting His divine pre-existence as the Second Person of a co-essential Trinity.

The Oriental came to Jesus as to the supreme exponent of spiritual life, the great expert

among the mystics of the world. To him history was but the outward shell which encased and concealed truth: all knowledge was esoteric: an incarnation of God was something very near to a contradiction in terms: spirit and flesh differed as good and evil. Jesus becomes a purely spiritual being, the founder of an exclusive sect, to whom He brings illumination if they know Him aright. His death is phantasmal; for He had no contact with matter and His body was an illusion, freed from all the needs and temptations that flesh is heir to. In its lowest form the Gnostic by denying the reality of Christ's manhood lost all sense of the need of right conduct; in its highest he accepted a dehumanised and nebulous figure whose teaching was twisted by all the ingenuities of cabbalistic symbolism, and whose recorded history was often simply disregarded.

The Greek came to Jesus as to the supreme counterpart in time and space of an unknowable God, as to the most perfect exemplar of the divine attributes. He had long learnt to worship his deities, Zeus or Apollo or Athene, not as in themselves

actually God or indeed as actually existent, but because they represented in concrete form certain attributes, which commended themselves to him as appropriately divine. With his intense conviction that God in His real nature could neither be conceived nor worshipped, it was natural for him to pay homage to the Absolute through creatures of his own choice, often of his own imagining. Jesus could fill the position which had been held by a previous patron-deity. He could be given a place, the supreme place, in the pantheon of Olympus. In its lowest form this belief simply adds the Christ to the number of those "gods many and lords many" through whose offices the eclectic pagan approached the unknown; in its highest it is almost inevitably Arian, insisting that Christ, though the most exalted of mediators between God and man, is not the supreme God; in neither case does it seriously care whether His nature is human or divine.

These three types of thought, which may be said in general to represent the deistic, the pantheistic, and the polytheistic attitudes towards religion, thus respectively developed

each of the three possible interpretations of Jesus, as man, as God, as demi-god. They have appeared frequently enough in the history of the Church both in ancient and recent times, and, although in its more extreme form each of the three has always been condemned, we shall find that most Christian thinkers incline towards one or other of them.

It is not however possible to treat each of the three separately or to classify so simply the schemes of doctrine which were actually proposed. Ebionism, which denied the Godhead of Jesus, was condemned at once by the Christian conscience, as soon as the new faith had cut the fetters which bound it to Judaism. Gnosticism, the Oriental theology in its earlier and more speculative form, obviously conflicted with the records and documents, and the pious but stupid Churchmen of the second century, a Polycarp or an Irenaeus, were able to condemn it by an appeal to history and tradition. Arianism, the faith of the half-converted heathens who followed Constantine in his change of religion, though it suited the shallow needs of the less spiritual Greeks and was supported by all

the external aids of court favour and unscrupulous intrigue, scandalised what was best in Christian life and was doomed to inevitable failure. But, though the Church had a harder task than the simple choice between three alternatives, her theology was nevertheless constructed within this circle of ideas by teachers who came definitely under one or other of these three influences.

Before we consider the actual history of Christological doctrine, it is necessary to explain our omission of the contribution of the Latin Church to the explanation of the fact of Jesus. There was of course a type of thought corresponding to the character of the Roman people, and it played no small part in the formulation of the creeds. But Rome with her strong legal bias and practical interests received the Christ in and through the society of which He was the founder. Her aim was to build up a fabric wherein men could find relief from doubt and could be helped to live by the acceptance of definite obligations and the fulfilment of rigid duties. The Church was of supreme, the Christ of derivative, importance. Speculation as to His

exact nature or uncertainty as to the scope of His Incarnation could but weaken the efficiency of His servants. What was required was a clear-cut formula, free from all vagueness, which, if it left the great paradox of the God-man unresolved by its frank refusal to enquire, should at least serve as a password to admit its holders to membership in the corporation, and as a test to exclude any whose inquisitiveness might introduce schism. Latin Churchmen were not worried by philosophy: they despised it. They were eager to lay down a precise definition: and being legalists were tempted to prefer precision to truth. They were ready to accept a form of words on authority: for an iron discipline was part of their heritage, and loyalty to the society forbade criticism of its tenets. Their function was to provide balanced phrases, when the more speculative branches of the Church had come to a deadlock. For this task they showed the trained genius of the constitutional lawyer: and, like his, their efforts did more to foreclose than promote progress. If we want to learn what Christians thought about Christ, we can leave

Latin-speaking Christendom almost out of account.

Among the Easterns two great schools of thought appear from the first. One of these stretches back to the Jewish converts of apostolic times, includes the majority of Syriac-speaking Christians, and finds its fullest exposition in the great series of Antiochene theologians, Paul of Samosata, Lucian, Eustathius, Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nestorius, Theodoret, and the later champions of Nestorianism. The other is first found among those teachers who combined the Hellenic genius for philosophy with the religious fervour and mysticism of the Orientals. From its origin in the Logos-theology of Justin the doctrine of this school comes to its richest expression in the works of the great Alexandrians, Clement and Origen, and from them passes in some measure to Athanasius, Apollinarius, the Cappadocians, Cyril of Alexandria, the Monophysites, and Leontius. This latter school with its long list of saints, thinkers, and controversialists has exerted by far the greater influence upon traditional Christology. Antioch might raise

a steady and sometimes necessary protest; but it is the Fathers of Alexandria whose writings have always formed the staple teaching of the Church and have come down to us with the full weight of Catholic approval. Their outlook has conditioned the content of orthodox opinion; their phrases have become the catchwords of successive generations; their failure (so far as they did fail) is the cause of our present perplexity. What we have to do here is to trace the outline of their work, so as to expose the growth and investigate the extent of their error. In this task the contemporary warnings of their rivals are of the greatest assistance.

In early days the two schools, although they interpreted the Christ from different standpoints, have one striking feature in common. While one party treats Him as an inspired man and the other as the incarnate Word, both are agreed in representing the distinction between Him and other men as one of degree not of kind, and in explaining the divine element in Him under the same terms as they would apply to the divine in other human beings. In the Jew this is not

surprising: the Word of the Lord had come upon Ezekiel, had indeed been the organ of revelation from the first, and now had descended in full measure upon the Son of Man. In the Greek too the same similarity, the same unity of species, connects the nature of the Christ with ours: the Lord was Logos, God's Word, the principle of right Reason, in flesh; but every human being possessed as his innate quality, as the mark to distinguish him from the irrational animals, seeds or germs of Logos. There had appeared in Christ the full brilliance of that divine fire which had already blazed brightly in philosophers like Heracleitus and Socrates or in saints like Abraham and Moses, and which existed as a smouldering spark in every human soul. To both Jew and Greek Christ was the firstfruits of mankind, the archetype of our race, its perfect product, its highest representative. His nature could be interpreted from the analogy of our own. His Godhead was exercised under the same conditions, revealed by the same qualities, and centred in the same sphere, as the godliness of His fellows. There is among these early believers

a strong sense of the nearness of human and divine, a bold readiness to claim that we are all the children of the most High, and a breadth of vision which, while breathing a deep devotion to the new and a thankful reverence for the Christ, refuses to glorify Him by vilifying others or to sacrifice the value of His example by removing Him into a class apart from us. Such an outlook is surely the natural corollary to a belief in the Incarnation. Can the antithesis between very God and very man be made consistent with that belief ?

Yet from the first the preconceptions both of Jews and Greeks contained one element which was perpetually threatening to complicate the question. Later Judaism in its exaggerated fear of any infringement of the first three commandments had fostered deistic ideas of the Godhead which were bound sooner or later to come into sharp conflict with the belief in the divinity of Jesus. Similarly the Christian Platonists had derived from the dialogues, and especially from their favourite *Republic*, a philosophy expressed in a series of antitheses, and it was inevitable that

they should think of God and man in contrast, of God as an eternal, immutable, indefinable Existence, of man as a transient, changing, limited Shadow. This terror of the Absolute, which their whole training enforced, slowly asserts itself and exerts a paralysing influence upon the glad vitality of early doctrine. Justin might thrust it aside by the virtual admission that there are two Gods, one far-off and unknowable, the other cosmic and self-revealing. Clement might try to bridge the gulf by insisting that Father and Son, Absolute and Incarnate, are linked together by the bond of a common love for one another and for men. But the influences of the past were too strong; the problem became more and more insistent, and doctrine began to forsake the practical realisation of the religious value of Jesus and to concentrate upon the metaphysical difficulty of His relationship to eternal Deity.

The change becomes most marked after the death of Origen. That great thinker was the first to survey the whole area of Christian thought and to map it out on a single consistent plan. This is not the place to

undertake an account of the fullest scheme of theology that has ever been constructed by one man. Suffice it to say that his heroic labours established doctrine on a secure basis, founded the sciences of textual criticism and of biblical exegesis, laid down the lines of an intelligent apologetic, gathered within one system the fruits of the whole field of contemporary knowledge, and produced the noblest attempt since St. John to interpret the whole sphere of human experience in the light of the religion of the Incarnation. His constant endeavour is to see Christianity from the divine side, to resolve the paradoxes of experience within the harmony of eternal truth, and to elicit from the facts of history those changeless principles of which they are the visible embodiment. If in some instances his logic breaks down, if he seems to assign too little weight to the human actualities, if in the last resort he fails to reconcile the possibility of an Incarnation with the hypothesis of an absolute God, his failure is not due to the neglect of any factor in the problem, nor to any lack of balance or fairness on his part, but to the inherent impossibility of the task

he had set himself to perform. He proposed to solve the great dilemma which confronted his Greek hearers and the Eastern Church; and, unless he had outraged their opinions, disappointed their hopes, and estranged their sympathies by throwing over the whole conception of God under terms of absolute existence, failure was inevitable. Where he had failed, no one else was likely to succeed.

It is among his pupils and successors that the evil influence of philosophic deism first produces concrete effects. Their smaller minds lacked the breadth and balance of their master; and being less wise they were also more dogmatic. Moreover paganism was beginning to contaminate the Church and to suggest its own characteristic explanation of Christ as the demi-god of the Arians. But before the great controversy broke out, indeed soon after Origen's death, a long step had been taken towards removing Christ from all true likeness to other men. The universal belief that Jesus differed from men in degree but not in kind was challenged and rejected by the Origenist bishops in 269 A.D., when they asserted against Paul of Samosata that the

mode in which the divine nature dwelt in Him was totally distinct from that in which we experience its indwelling.[1] This was a verdict, inevitable perhaps if the divinity of our Lord was to be defended, but pregnant of the gravest consequences. The analogy between the Logos and the seeds of Logos, between the Word of the Lord in the prophets and the Word in Jesus, which had served for a century of apologetic, was rendered illogical. A definite barrier was built up between Christ and man. Henceforward there was admitted to be an element in Him which was not subject to the conditions of our state, which could not be studied under the categories of human experience, which was always liable to elude the grasp of the student or to provide him with an excuse for conclusions otherwise indefensible, and which must in the end render futile all attempts to explain or indeed to utilise the Incarnation.

A further step in the same direction was taken all unwittingly by Athanasius, and

[1] Paul was condemned for saying that the Godhead dwelt in Jesus *οὐκ οὐσιωδῶς, ἀλλὰ κατὰ ποιοτήτα.* Whatever the precise significance of the terms, it is clear that this was their purport—to deny the analogy between Christ and mankind.

taken as the outcome of that from which he drew his chief strength. The great champion of the Nicene faith was able to stand alone against the Arians because he, like St. Paul, based his theology upon the need for redemption. By Arius and the mass of Greeks salvation was treated as a matter of imitation. In their eyes it was ignorance, and ignorance only, that kept man from following the good: Christ came to give an example for men to copy: and so it does not vitally matter whether He is fully divine or no: it is enough that he is vastly superior to ourselves—and this the Arians never disputed. Athanasius maintained that man wanted not a pattern but a Redeemer; that it was mere mockery to tell men to be Christ-like, since sin was not lack of knowledge but impotence of will; and that the essential quality of a Redeemer must be that He is mighty to save —else how can we trust Him? If we are conscious that our state is one of utter corruption and that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves, then our Saviour will by contrast be emphasised as in all things the opposite of this; he must be God of

God, Light of Light, very God of very God. Athanasius was unquestionably right, and Christianity was wholly justified, in refusing to take a shallow view of sin or to disparage the importance of Christ. But it was unfortunate that this additional inducement to insist upon the distinction between Jesus and men was made at a time when a deistic conception of God was predominant. For the result was an almost complete surrender of belief in the real manhood of our Lord.

The eternal attributes of God, changelessness and impassibility, omnipotence and omniscience, were freely ascribed to the Incarnate; and the historic figure of the Son of Man was racked and twisted in order to make it support these attributes. His human growth involved change: therefore we must suppose that He only pretended to grow. His human temptations involved the possibility of sinning: but it is intolerable that God should have any contact with sin, so we must posit that His manhood was physically and automatically sinless. His human ignorance, His human weariness, His fear and astonishment,

His agony and death, all these are symptoms of a nature which is in contrast with the divine: we must explain them away. So the Alexandrians learnt to argue, when once they had allowed their devotion to the Absolute to outweigh their fidelity to history, when once they had sacrificed commonsense in the interests of metaphysics. The whole school follows the same path. Athanasius is almost certainly at one with Apollinarius in treating the humanity of our Lord as a mere veil through which deity revealed itself. The Cappadocians, though they violently attacked the Apollinarian denial of a human spirit to Christ, yet in fact themselves represented His human nature as absorbed in the divine. Cyril, even if he concealed his Apollinarianism under specious phrases like "impersonal humanity," nevertheless "borrowed all his best thought from Apollinarius"; and his doctrine of the Incarnation, though accepted by the Church at Ephesus in 431 A.D., was wholly calculated to promote the Monophysite belief, which denied all true manhood to Jesus and reduced the Incarnation to the level of a theophany.

Thus there was developed by the Alexandrians during the two centuries which separate Origen from Dioscurus a Christology which applied boldly to the Incarnate the attributes proper to eternal Godhead. The Conqueror of sin was actually said to have been physically unable to feel the force of temptation. The Conqueror of death was all the time consciously immortal. The Crucified was incapable of suffering. Well might the Antiochenes cry out that this was to make nonsense of the whole Gospel-story. Justly might they argue that when Jesus said that He was ignorant He was either lying or was not omniscient; that His temptation loses all its value if it was only a pasteboard victory in a sham fight; that if the drama of redemption was indeed nothing but a spectacle, a stage-play in which the principal actor was pretending and only pretending to suffer and die, then the Incarnation was a jest and a bitter jest, and men would be well rid of it all.

That this criticism is thoroughly deserved may be abundantly proved from the writings of each and all of the Alexandrians. Two instances from the two ablest theologians of

the school will suffice. Origen[1] when writing of the nativity of Jesus represents the divine Logos as reminding Himself that now in His incarnate infancy He, the Word of the Father, must forget how to speak the words of men. Apollinarius,[2] describing Christ's hunger during His temptation, declares that His human nature only felt the pangs so long as His divine power was withheld by an act of will; this power when it was brought into operation automatically removed the suffering. These illustrations, which could be paralleled even from the most orthodox Alexandrians,[3] show to what straits they were reduced in the attempt to interpret the Godhead of Christ in terms of the Absolute. The distinction between Jesus and man had grown deeper and deeper until thinkers of the first rank, men of real learning and devotion, were driven into absurdities. The audacity of the claim that God and man were one in Christ Jesus had been too much for them. They

[1] Origen, *Hom. in Luc.* xix.

[2] *Apud* Theodoret, *Dial.* i. (Lietzmann, *Apollinaris. Frag.* 127).

[3] *e.g.* Athanasius, *Or. c. Ar.* iii. 51, and often elsewhere.

had failed to revise their concept of the Godhead, and when the choice between Christianity and Greek metaphysics confronted them they were led, partly on intellectual grounds, partly under a mistaken sense of reverence, to hold fast to their metaphysics. So long as we define God solely under categories of changelessness, an Incarnation is inevitably unthinkable. Most believers in the Absolute deny the divinity of Jesus or at least represent its physical attributes as laid aside by an act of self-emptying. The Alexandrians were not very successful in their treatment of the kenosis—indeed only the greatest of them attempt this solution of the problem. They were too richly endowed with Christian experience to question the Lord's Godhead. It was easier for them to throw over the historical and so to juggle with the Gospels as to leave, in place of the vivid portrait of the Son of Man, the vague lineaments of a Son of God as depicted by the fancy of Alexandria.

Before we proceed to the consideration of the Creed of Chalcedon, it is necessary to pay some attention to the school of Antioch. This is the more important for us, because

there has recently been a marked movement of sympathy towards them, a reaction against an age-long condemnation, a recognition that as compared with their rivals they approximate much more closely both in method and results to the modern attitude. They have been highly commended by Dr. Harnack and the Ritschlians: even in this country there has been much praise of them: and to some extent their work, if viewed from the standpoint of to-day, merits that praise. We will therefore examine their theory in somewhat greater detail.

Starting as we have seen from the human side of Christ's nature, the Antiochenes had worked successively along similar lines and produced a type of thought that varies little from first to last save in fulness of treatment. Their general principles differed widely from those of the Alexandrians. They interpreted Scripture literally, not allegorically: they insisted upon the practical and ethical rather than the speculative and metaphysical: they were concerned primarily with the concrete analysis of human experience, not with the mystical search after divine self-revelation;

in a word they were scientists more than philosophers, Aristotelians not Platonists, and their theology is strongly marked with a realism which, if it sometimes deserves the epithet "earth-bound," comes as a relief after the ethereal flights of their rivals.

The finest example of their Christology is to be found in the fragments[1] of the works of Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia, the teacher of Nestorius and the sternest critic of Apollinarius and the Alexandrians. The chief points of his teaching can be summarised as follows. Jesus in His incarnate state is subject to the same limitations as other men: He grew in knowledge, He fought against sin, He experienced suffering and sorrow and fear, being tested in all things like as we are. Unlike us He triumphed through it all, choosing on every occasion to follow the highest and succeeding in living a Godlike because sinless life. His relationship to God is to be explained, not in terms of nature or essence, but in terms of love and will.

[1] It must never be forgotten that the two most interesting thinkers, Apollinarius and Theodore, are chiefly known to us in extracts selected by their enemies, and divorced from their context.

The divine Logos and the human Jesus are united because they both yearn after the same objects, purpose the same ends, display the same characteristics. Thus in Jesus is revealed the full content of the mind of God—not, be it noted, the eternal and physical qualities of Godhead, but such attributes as can be present within the limits of a human personality and environment. The method of this divine indwelling in our Lord is similar to that whereby God dwells in His saints. For all men, if they love God, do become to that extent at one with Him, and are enabled to do His will. No other mode of union is possible (so Theodore maintained) and no other, if possible, would be meritorious or valuable to us; for only so can Jesus have been very man. So far the theory is consistent and intelligible. He has restated the analogy which the Origenists repudiated against Paul of Samosata, and by his emphasis upon love as the motive and mode of the Incarnation has introduced a thought of the greatest importance. So far he has given us a sound basis for a satisfying Christology.

It is in his attempts to meet the charge

of degrading Christ to the level of a prophet that Theodore falls into confusion. He tries, for example, to safeguard the uniqueness of the union by insisting that, whereas the indwelling of God in other men is momentary and precarious, being conditional upon their continuance in virtue, in Jesus it is, at least after His baptism, irrevocable and unconditioned, the habit of virtue having become in Him fixed and unalterable. This is a clear concession to the Alexandrians and logically involves the denial of human growth and struggle upon which otherwise such emphasis is laid. So too, to escape the charge of teaching a progressive deification, he introduces the thought that the Godhead was always present with Jesus even from His conception in the womb, but that this presence was at first bestowed in anticipation of His human choice of goodness. Here again there is a dilemma: for if Jesus was physically divine from the beginning, then His human choice was never exercised under our conditions, and the whole idea of a unity of will achieved through the right use of choice falls to the ground. He has, in fact, shared the fate of

his opponents and like them has failed to revise his concept of Godhead or to escape from the tyranny of the metaphysical.

We ought probably to reckon it to his credit that he was willing to state contradictory opinions and to sacrifice logical coherence by maintaining them. For in his days it required some courage to champion a paradox. But none the less it is clear that he has not solved the problem; that he has left the irreconcilables still unreconciled; that, though his protest on behalf of the manhood of Jesus was apposite enough, and though his stress upon a union of wills under the bond of a mutual love might have led him to a solution, he was distracted by controversy into accepting the metaphysical as well as the ethical attributes of Godhead as involved in an Incarnation, and so fell into inconsistencies and into the very errors which he set out to overthrow. His conclusions are indeed on the whole less satisfactory than those of the Alexandrians. For they did at least insist upon the divinity of Christ, whereas Theodore can hardly escape the charge of teaching either two Christs or a Christ who is not

quite truly Son of Man and is even less truly Son of God. The premises and methods of the Antiochenes are to the modern mind attractive and right: they failed to follow them to their logical consequences: and their condemnation was just. In this they are the exact counterpart of the Alexandrians, whose results were in the best interests of the Christian religion of the time, but whose methods and theories are to most of us quaintly unconvincing.

Between the two schools a dispute raged for nearly two centuries. In its later and fiercer stage it has received the name of the "Two Natures" controversy, and for its solution was propounded the Creed of Chalcedon, the standard definition of Christological orthodoxy. The history of the struggle is neither edifying nor for our purpose important. All we need do is to describe the doctrine which was its final product.

To do so is not hard. The Alexandrians were insisting that Christ was divine; the Antiochenes were equally emphatic that He was human. The deadlock was complete: for, as we have seen, the two terms, God

and man, were strictly irreconcilable, since God meant to the Church in general something best defined as "not man." Neither side was prepared to give way, and the scandal of their quarrel was as notorious as it was unsavoury. Peace, and peace at any price, must be made. A compromise, even at the expense of logic, became increasingly needful. Obviously the easiest way out of the impasse was to swallow the paradox, add together the two opposites, and declare that in the one Christ were two natures, the one possessed of all the attributes of Godhead, the other the centre of all those qualities in the historic Jesus which were reckoned human. Theology is always being tempted to give up the search for truth and to accept formulae which sound well but mean little. It is difficult to visualise and hold fast the entities of religion and the real content of abstract terms. All too often men are led astray by phrases into a metaphysic out of touch with experience. And in trying to define the Incarnation such a danger is continually present, and can scarcely be avoided if once we admit, as the Greeks did, that the Godhead of Jesus introduces an element to

which our human nature can supply no parallel, no analogy.

This simple mode of escape from the dilemma had in one form or another been already employed by a string of Fathers of both schools from Athanasius onward, the Antiochenes insisting that not God but only a human babe could undergo birth, and the Alexandrians ascribing to the flesh of Jesus all those sufferings which seemed incompatible with the dignity of the divine. Thus, for example, the statement occurs in several of the most famous writings of the time that Christ, when raising Lazarus from the grave, asked "Where have ye laid him?" in His capacity as Son of Man, but spake the word of power, "Lazarus come forth," in exercise of His prerogative as Son of God. Cyril[1] indeed had expressly condemned this habit of assigning the sayings to the nature which seemed most appropriate: but even he, finding that his declaration raised an outcry, made haste to explain it away and finally withdrew it altogether. So when Leo of Rome followed this line in his famous Tome

[1] *Ep.* xvii. and the Fourth Anathema appended to it.

to the Eastern Churches, he had precedents to guide him—although it must be admitted that his work is on a lower level than that of the meanest of the Greeks. In the Incarnate there are of course two Natures: He is truly Son of God and truly Son of Man. His Godhead is all ablaze with miracles: from it are derived all those deeds and words which we normal mortals recognise as supernatural. His manhood is the prey of every affliction: in it He hungers and thirsts and agonises and dies: to it belong the attributes, weariness, surprise, ignorance and the like, which we share with Him. The two Natures operate alternately; or rather He employs one or the other as He will. Sometimes it is the God claiming to control legions of angels; sometimes it is the Man accepting a drop of vinegar. Yet, like an actor with two parts to play, the Christ to whom both natures belong is Himself one. From His throne in heaven He had realised the sufferings of men and moved by pity for them He laid aside His pomp and took upon Himself Man. He never ceased to be wholly and consciously divine—there was no break in

the continuity of His existence as God. But He acquired by becoming incarnate a second sphere of activity, and, because the characteristics of the new nature were opposite to those of the old, He could only enter into the environment of earth by restricting to that extent the full exercise of the attributes of infinity. Moreover, since both natures now belong to Him, the two do in Him lose something of their distinctness, so that the glory of deity clothes the lowly manhood and the weakness of the human is lifted up into union with the divine. At this point the letter becomes more than usually rhetorical; the author obviously loses himself in a mist of vague language; and the exact extent, method, and effect of this union is left discreetly unspecified.

Such was the content of the famous letter which the Eastern Church refused to hear at Ephesus in 449 A.D., but, after a change of Emperor, hailed with shouts of approval at Chalcedon two years later. The political advantages of agreement with the Court and the desire to support the winning side had throughout the controversy weighed more

heavily than regard for truth or consistency. Cyril had used every art of diplomacy, bribery as well as lies, to vanquish Nestorius. Now Cyril's methods recoiled upon his successor, and Nestorius was avenged if not vindicated. It is one of the tragedies of history that so long-standing and vital a controversy between schools of such intellectual eminence should have ended in the subservient acceptance of so unsatisfactory a document. But the times were evil, and the members of the Council were small men. Theodoret, the most learned of them, welcomed Leo as the champion of his own Antiochene faith. Dioscurus, sincere even if not very profound, was condemned before the question of the creed was raised. The rest were flatterers and turncoats prepared to sign whatever they were bidden. So a formula, less crude than Leo's Tome, but embodying its chief contentions, was composed and accepted. Christ the incarnate was declared to be in two Natures whose union though complete involved no confusion. Each nature possessed its peculiar attributes, each was revealed in its appropriate actions. He was one Person, with two spheres of

consciousness, two fields of operation. Separation of the two was forbidden, though reconciliation of them was unattempted. The defects of the Leonian doctrine were implied, if not expressed.

Subsequent controversies only made matters worse. The subject when it arose was simply used as a battle-ground for the politicians. A century later the Monophysites were in power and secured the sentence of anathema upon Theodore of Mopsuestia, after a long campaign of pamphleteering. In the reaction against them, the principle of the duality of Natures was extended so as to include a duality of Wills. The patristic age comes to an ignominious end in a period of intellectual stagnation. There are few if any theologians of merit. The saints were wholly engaged in practical duties, missionary, administrative, or ecclesiastical. The task of keeping religion alive at all was burden enough, when all the world was in ferment. Doctrine must needs wait for more settled times. Men were content to accept the paradox enshrined in the Athanasian Creed, "Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh

subsisting; equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father, as touching His Manhood; who although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ."

We must consider later how far the modern mind, if it be given a fair measure of freedom to interpret, can accept this definition. Much of the present revolt against traditional dogma is due no doubt to the general dislike of all dogmatism: we are content to take a "refusal to define," a "philosophic doubt," as the proper attitude of mind for an age of transition. Much also is due to the dislike for the crude and concrete phrases of ancient formulae, for the whole paraphernalia of the "substance-person" metaphysic, for the Greek readiness (as one of their own greatest doctors has put it) to "handle spiritual natures as if they were pint-pots," things of known content and precise outline, to treat the union of human and divine as if it were the fusion of metals or the mixture of liquids. These two motives would neither of them afford a true pretext for rejecting tradition. For theology has no business to be content

with a permanent agnosticism, and, if it is only the language of the creeds that we criticise, there need be no fatal barrier in the way of their acceptance. But unfortunately this is not all. The objections to the orthodox position are less superficial, less easy to answer, than this. Certainly if we are to read the Christology of the Quicumque vult in the light of Leo's Tome, read it, that is, in what was almost beyond dispute its original meaning, we must recognise that it conveyed a conception of our Lord which is scarcely tolerable. We cannot accept, we could not be profited by, a theory of the Incarnation which represents Christ as looking down from the serene atmosphere of heaven upon Himself as He assumes the guise of a man on the earth. We should destroy the reality of His struggle against sin, we should sacrifice the value of His life and death, if we thought of Him as an actor whose true self was untouched by the events of the drama in which He chose to play a part. If He never experienced the limitations under which we labour, if He never knew the fierceness of a life-and-death conflict with evil, if He never

suffered the despair which is more bitter than bodily torment, if in fact He was never man but only "like man," then He is of no use to us. He has shared our griefs and carried our sorrows in name not in reality. He has but come to mock us with the spectacle of a nature that is not ours, of an example that we cannot even hope to follow. Such a belief would be a refinement of cruel irony.

To most minds, I am convinced, any doctrine, which included this theory of a double sphere of consciousness in Christ and so made the Gospel-story theatrical and unreal, would appear absurd to the verge of blasphemy. It is inconsistent alike with reason and with Scripture. Yet it comes to us supported by a great weight of orthodox opinion, and is familiar enough in the language of devotion. Hymns and homilies abound in phrases that imply it: the Babe embraced in the arms of Mary is at the same time consciously embracing in His eternal arms the entire universe; He who was obedient to a carpenter had always at His command the homage of the angelic host; He is at once reigning on the cross of Calvary and reigning on the

throne of heaven. All such pious antitheses assume the belief that Jesus the incarnate possessed the attributes and exercised the functions proper to the infinite. Indeed every one of us who ascribes omnipotence or omniscience to the acts or words of our Lord is in reality assuming the same belief. And although most of us may be ready to give it up in its cruder forms, we must needs hesitate before we surrender it altogether. For if we strip Him of the qualities of the Absolute, how far can we still call Him, in the conventional sense at least, divine ? We seem to be impugning His authority, repudiating His claim to infallibility, jeopardising His efficacy as Saviour, and losing much that for all its difficulty is of real religious value.

Yet unless we can revise our concept of the nature of God and of the scope of an Incarnation, we shall be confronted with the choice between our religious experience which insists that Jesus is God and our intellectual honesty which will not let us accept the Chalcedonian theology. There is the great dilemma. Are we to throw over our reason and join the obscurantists, or be false to our

instincts and ally ourselves with the agnostics ? Can no middle way, no escape, be found ?

We may at least lay down, as a result of our present enquiry into history, this clear conclusion, which shall condition our subsequent search, that the Christ must be one. We must be able to echo Frederic Myers's [1] line " Jesu divinest when thou most art man," even if to do so would have seemed blasphemy to the Fathers. We must maintain with Bishop Weston [2] that in Christ there can be " only a single consciousness," that " as incarnate He cannot receive or use or know what His manhood cannot mediate," that " He never leaves the level upon which men and women at their best can move and act." Only so shall we be true to the records of His own life ; for the Jesus of the Gospels, whatever else He may be, is never self-conscious or theatrical or unhuman. Only so shall we interpret Him for men of our day to recognise and receive Him ; otherwise we shall be starting with an assumption and forcing the facts to fit the theory. Only so shall we realise for ourselves His full

[1] In *St. Paul.* [2] *The One Christ*, pp. 157, 164, 173.

significance and uniqueness; for it is when we have dared to set aside all that is exotic and unnatural from our portrait of Him, to equate His experience with ours, and to estimate His triumphs in the light of our failures, that the wonder of Him, the appeal of Him, becomes plain. If He was unable to sin, then it is no merit to have resisted temptation: if He was omniscient, then it needed no courage to face the cross: if He was not like me, then He cannot help me. "What He did not assume, that He did not redeem." We must start from the fact that He was very man, if ever we are to learn to worship Him as very God.

LECTURE THREE

THE MANY-SIDEDNESS OF JESUS

The traditional definition of the Incarnation, that Christ is one Person having two Natures and two Wills, arose as we have seen from an attempt to explain Him in terms of a preconceived antithesis between God and man. The Fathers were led from the two assumptions, that God was infinite and almighty, and that Jesus was God, both premises being in a sense true and inevitable, to the conclusion that Jesus was also infinite and almighty. When they found that the syllogism was not in fact consistent with the records of the Gospels, they were driven to all sorts of dodges and quibbles—perfect humanity, impersonal humanity, transference of attributes, self-limitation of the Godhead, and so forth.

In our first lecture we showed that this assumption as to the nature of God was inadequate to express our knowledge of Him: in our second we have seen that the use of it did in fact produce a theory of the Incarnation that is intolerable. It is evident that, if we are to explain what we mean by the Godhead of Jesus, we must follow a different method: we must start with the facts and see whither they lead us. In a scientific age, when every child is taught to observe the fall of an apple and to deduce from it the law of gravity, it is surely not unreasonable to plead that in theology we must begin with the Gospels not the Creeds, with history not metaphysics, with Jesus the Incarnate not Christology the doctrine of the Incarnation. As it is, we are far too ready to take over from our Christian heritage a portrait of our Lord painted in the conventional posture and colouring of a stained-glass window; to think of Him in devotional language which means much to saints and sages but little to the novice and the wayfarer. The old old story of Jesus and His love has lost not only much of its freshness by age-long repetition, but

also, I am afraid, much of its truth: for nothing veils reality so successfully as those cant phrases which slip lightly from the lips, but neither satisfy the mind nor touch the heart. If we compare the Jesus of the Gospels with the Christ of the Churches, the Jesus so vividly described by St. Mark with the Christ as we picture Him when we pray, we shall probably be startled into wondering what possible connection there can be between them. We shall at least realise that the challenge "Jesus or Christ?" is a fair one. We shall not be surprised that scholars are able from the records to compose and justify studies of the Nazarene which strike us as bizarre and blasphemous. For we shall find that there exists a great number of His deeds and words which is slurred over in our conventional idea of Him, that there are many matters on which His actual teaching seems revolutionary and upsetting, that His standard of values on moral and social questions is evidently not ours, that in fact we have fashioned from the stuff of our own desires an image which we worship in His stead under His name. He loved the poor; we

despise them: He made friends of harlots and outcasts; we shrink from them: He said, Pray to your Father in secret; we reckon a man irreligious unless he rents a pew and appears in it: He poured forth curses upon the respectable and the devout; we hold them up as models of Christian virtue: He denounced the clergy of His time for caring too much for minutiae; we make the word of God of none effect by our tradition, and the people love to have it so: He bade us turn the other cheek to the smiter; we are in the midst of a war which we know to be righteous. On every side the contrast between His views and ours, the compromise which has brought about the contrast, is only too painfully familiar. We can perhaps explain and justify it—and in spite of it still call ourselves His followers. But the existence of it should warn us of the need to study again and again that amazing Figure whose character is perpetually showing sides which surpass our powers of synthesis, but whose authority nevertheless convinces and constrains us even against our will.

It is necessary to lay stress upon the danger of thus reading our own conventional notions back into the Gospels, because if our study is to be valuable it will become so in proportion as we can bring to it freshness and receptivity. In every sphere of life the most precious gift that man can possess is this power of seeing and describing things as they are, not as we are taught to think that they ought to be. The great painter, the great poet, the great prophet, is he who can look upon the familiar and the commonplace as if for the first time with the clear gaze and candid wonder of a child, he for whom heaven and earth are always being made new. And in nothing is this gift more needful than in this quest for the historical Jesus upon which we are engaged; in nothing is its exercise more difficult. For, on the one hand, the scenes and characters, the events and utterances, with which we have to deal, have been known to us in their conventionalised form ever since we were old enough to know anything, so that we require insight and imagination of no ordinary kind if we are to study them without bias or presuppositions: and, on the

other, the story of the Incarnation, though so familiar, relates to a time, to places and people and circumstances, very far removed from our own, so that there is need of trained scholarship and sympathetic knowledge for its full interpretation. The successful student must be at once simple and sophisticated; he must possess alike the freshness of childhood and the learning of maturity; he must have a full measure of human instincts and interests so as not to treat Christ and His followers as if they were lay figures or factors in a problem, and at the same time he must not lack the academic training which can understand how the language and habits of the first century differ from those of to-day. The double qualification is not a common one.

The failure of the "higher criticism" to appeal to the normal mind—a failure that, whatever the critics say, is obvious enough—is due, I believe, to the rarity of this combination of necessary qualities. Professors of theology are on the whole singularly deficient in commonsense, in that sense of balance and proportion which is so rarely found in specialists. Having freed themselves

from the conventions of traditional orthodoxy, they straightway become enslaved to the newer and therefore less reasonable conventions of critical study. They see Christ not indeed through the incense-cloud of an epoch of worship, but through the miasma of a century of hypotheses. They study Him not as He is portrayed in the tenets of the Catholic religion, but as He is caricatured in the theories of Teutonic unbelief. The catch-phrases of the pulpit have been exchanged for the cant of the lecture-room. And a picture is produced which, while scarcely more true to the Gospels than the Christ of the stained-glass window, is totally inadequate either to account for the foundation of the Church in the past or to satisfy her religious needs in the present. Dr. Drews' view that the historic Jesus never existed at all is the logical consequence, the *reductio ad absurdum*, of the critical method which has found favour in Germany and too often amongst ourselves. It is hardly surprising that the ordinary man regards the critics either with irritation or with amusement.

It is not at all that the general principles

of criticism are wrong. As we have seen, no doctrine of Jesus can start elsewhere than with a minute study of the records of Him. We must submit each book to a searching test, noting all indications as to the date, the sources, the authenticity, the homogeneity of the work, and tracing out all those details which help us to estimate the purpose, the knowledge, the limitations, the reliability, of its author. We must then compare the books one with another, collecting the resemblances and differences both of subject and treatment, pondering over the meaning of the larger divergences and inconsistencies in the narratives and of the minute alterations in phrasing and arrangement, and trying to formulate an accurate account of their literary relationship and historical value. All this must be done, has been done, with care and caution and courage.

Nor is it with the general results of this method that we shall find much ground for quarrel. The theory to which the great mass of scholars has been led, though neither final nor even wholly conclusive, gives us at least a plausible explanation of the complex

problem of the Synoptic Gospels and a substantial basis for our knowledge of Jesus. That St. Mark's account in its written form lay before and was used by the authors of the First and Third Gospels can hardly be disputed in view of the number and character of those small variations in the parallel narratives for which it provides an explanation. Undoubtedly the hypothesis of a common oral tradition might explain diversity of phrase or word, and is to some extent supported by the fact that the records differ from one another less in the wording of the speeches than in the accounts of their occasion and scene—which is exactly what happens to any of us when we perpetuate an anecdote. But when we find continual evidence of deliberate and purposive alteration, of the removal by the later authors of superfluities and solecisms, of the softening down of what seemed to them irreverent or unworthy, of the adaptation of simple story to meet the controversies and rebut the criticisms of a later time, then, as we note instance after instance of the same thing, the multitude of them, each perhaps trivial in itself, convinces

us beyond doubt that no theory of coincidences such as the oral hypothesis demands, that nothing short of a literary dependence upon the written word, will explain the facts.

And if this be the case, then it is clear that our Second Gospel must be given a place of supreme importance among the available sources of our knowledge. That the bulk of it was derived from St. Peter is not only the universal testimony of tradition, but is also accepted by most modern scholars: and there is much to be said for the identification of St. Mark himself with the young man in the linen garment who was present at Gethsemane. In any case we may be reasonably confident that we have here the impressions of eyewitnesses, committed to writing at a time when memories were still vivid, and containing a faithful and on the whole a consecutive description of the chief incidents of the ministry in Galilee and of the final visit to Jerusalem. It should be admitted that several clear indications in the book itself of other and unrecorded events and several probable cases of chronological error, together

with the need for the later Gospels and the definite statement of Papias, warn us plainly against assuming, as some critics have done, that the account is complete or always arranged in strict order of time. St. Peter was not continuously present with Jesus; he was almost certainly separated from Him during the last journey from Galilee to Judaea: and on these occasions much must have happened of which St. Mark tells us nothing. Nevertheless, with this reservation, we can accept the Gospel as our strongest witness for the outline of events during the final year of our Lord's life on earth, and as our clearest record of the attitude of His contemporaries, and of His own environment and methods, habits and actions.

A similar argument from the comparison of the Synoptic Gospels with one another leads to the belief that behind those passages in "St. Matthew" and St. Luke which obviously report the same incidents and sayings, and which are not derived from St. Mark, there lies a second documentary source. Q, as this is commonly called, though it has been reconstructed with elaborate care by several

scholars, remains a somewhat unsubstantial outline, lacking the vigorous originality of St. Mark, and in part so blurred and indistinct that it melts into its background and we cannot say how far it extends. If we could be sure that St. Matthew's book, the Logia, was really a collection of the sayings of Jesus and not of proof-texts (and we must admit that Papias' words suit the latter rather than the former meaning); if we could even maintain that Q like the Logia was written in Hebrew; then we might hesitate less: for the Logia which we have lost could then be safely identified with Q which we have discovered. Such identification, if it were certain, would not only explain the somewhat mysterious title of our First Gospel, which in its present form is obviously not St. Matthew's work, but it would place the existence of Q on a much more definite footing. Very many critics accept this conclusion as sufficiently demonstrated, and some have even gone so far as to suggest that the absence of a Passion-narrative may indicate that in its original form it was written down during the actual course of the Ministry.

Even if we set aside such attractive speculations and leave its authorship an open question, there is still abundant evidence to prove its early date and to guarantee the authenticity of its contents. In the first place, that it was sufficiently well and widely known to be used by the two evangelists, writing as they do for different readers, with different motives, and in different localities, presumes that it must have been written within forty or probably thirty years of the Crucifixion: for the whole trend of recent study (with few and unimportant exceptions) is in favour of rejecting a late date for either Gospel. In the second place, the possibility of its having been used by St. Mark is at least arguable: and if so, the earlier of these decades is late enough. Finally the very remarkable parallels to its thought and expression that are to be found in the epistle of St. James go far to show its primitive character: for St. James with his naive misquotation of the verse from Genesis concerning the faith of Abraham must surely have written before St. Paul wrote to the Romans and gently corrected

the mistake, and before the Council of Jerusalem to which the epistle if later and genuine (and still more so if a forgery) must certainly have alluded. We may safely conclude that there is strong probability that in Q we have a written source underlying the common matter in our First and Third Gospels, that this document may be of apostolic and is certainly of very early origin, and that its contents are of first-rate importance as a record of the sayings of our Lord.

To these two chief witnesses may be added a third of perhaps equal value, the account of parables and other teaching incorporated in the large section[1] of St. Luke commonly called the Peraean Ministry or by critics the Great Interpolation. It is possible that the whole of these central chapters should be assigned to Q, although very much of them is absent from the First Gospel: certainly as they stand in St. Luke Q-passages are freely inserted among them. If they are from some third and independent source, we can only admit that there is no indication of its nature or worth. The section contains much im-

[1] Chs. ix. 46–xix. 27.

portant and striking material—material that bears on the face of it the stamp of authenticity: but in the absence of clear evidence as to its origin we can hardly use it with the same security that we feel towards the record of St. Mark or even towards the non-Marcan parallels.

Almost the same must be said of the other passages peculiar to St. Luke. It may be that he derived his Birth-narrative from Philip's daughters, or from Joanna, or even from the Blessed Virgin herself. This same Joanna or Manaen may have supplied the special information as to Herod Antipas. If the Lucan authorship be admitted (and the case for it is overwhelmingly strong), any of these is possible; and St. Luke's own preface makes it probable that he got his material from a variety of sources. But the matter is still in the category of speculation and guesswork, and we must refuse to dogmatise too precisely as to the respective claims of its various elements, while admitting the high value of the Gospel as a whole, and noting the evidence of its author's care and reliability.

Much less importance is to be given to the incidents for which the First Gospel is our only authority. It is obvious that here we are dealing not with a simple history, but with a narrative carefully adapted to the needs of Christian apologetics, and deliberately coloured by the desire to present persons and events in a peculiar light. St. Mark's interest is in the facts of the life of Jesus for their own sake: "St. Matthew" records them because they serve to prove his contention that Jesus was the Jews' Messiah, the fulfilment of the apocalyptic hopes and prophecies of the nation. This does not in itself necessarily lessen their value. History written with an ulterior motive may still be historically true. But in many cases the author of the First Gospel has allowed his devotion to his purpose to lead him into palpable mistakes, into suppressions and distortions, into strained interpretations of the Old Testament and unwarranted additions from current eschatology. Speaking generally, it is fair to say that the matter peculiar to "St. Matthew" lacks that power of self-evident truth which is so convincing a proof of the genuineness

of the other Synoptic material. In St. Mark, in Q, in St. Luke's additional sections, we feel instinctively that the records are not, could not have been, the work of human imagination, that they contain in very truth a revelation, an unveiling, of something, of someone, who would otherwise be far above out of our sight. Men, and most of all Jews of the first century, would have produced quite a different picture of an incarnate God, unless they had drawn their portrait from the life. But in these miracles and sayings of the First Evangelist I must confess that to my mind there seems a close resemblance to the style and quality of the apocryphal gospels: they seem to be on a lower level of spirituality: there is an unreality, a lack of reserve, a desire to astonish, that makes one suspect that they are pinchbeck and tinsel rather than the authentic gold. The life of Christ elsewhere is so completely free from flourish and pageantry, His very miracles are so spontaneous and natural, that incidents like the coming of the Magi, or the finding of the shekel in the fish's mouth, or the account of the earthquake and angel at the resurrec-

tion frankly jar upon one's sense of fitness. They are too like the man-invented wonders of the religious romances. One feels that they derogate from the dignity and impair the meaning of Jesus. Such a subjective impression may be worth nothing: but at least these narratives are, unless critical study is wholly at fault, the least reliable portion of the Synoptists' writings.

Of the other sources for the life of Jesus, St. Paul's epistles are accepted by all sane students as the earliest and the most certainly genuine. Unfortunately for the historian of the incarnate life, the great apostle cared not to know Christ after the flesh. What he did know, unless more is contained among St. Luke's material, is almost confined to the central facts, the death and resurrection of Jesus upon which he bases his missionary preaching, and the institution of the Eucharist which he emphasises as the most vital of the Church's ordinances. Indeed it must strike us as somewhat curious that the great missionary, whose message is wholly concerned with the new personal relationship between God and man through love, and whose whole

life breathes such ardent devotion to his Master, should have dwelt so little upon the small details of the Master's history which have been to most saints the very food of their affection. Peter, as we read him in St. Mark, recalls vividly each familiar gesture: John, if we may for the moment treat him as the author of the Fourth Gospel, has long pondered over those golden years when the Word tabernacled among men: love shines from their every page. But Paul is content to fix his passionate heart upon the supreme act of Love crucified, to find in that alone the challenge to a life of ceaseless loyalty, to take from it a complete summary and presentation of the mind of Christ, and to toil and agonise until the mind thus revealed in a single scene on Calvary be reproduced in his own self. He was one of those rare spirits who can spend themselves to the full for one great cause, who can gather up the energies of their whole being and focus them upon one sublime object, who having found the pearl of great price straightway sell all that they have, sacrifice everything else that life can offer, in order to obtain it. The

Cross dominates him utterly, heart and mind and will: and if we find him somewhat lacking in human tenderness or in those weaknesses that we love, if we wonder at the anger that blazes forth so swiftly against his opponents, at the impatience that rebels against every sign of physical or moral frailty in himself, we can measure by these symptoms the strength of his loyalty, the singleness of his purpose. And the very fact of this concentration upon crucifixion and resurrection is historically of some importance. It should warn us against accepting a doctrine of Jesus that omits the Cross and sees in Him the gentle teacher of a new ethic, or a theory of His Church that would base the origin of Christianity upon the bare notion of human brotherhood. St. Paul's teaching, and the continuous vitality of the society that he organised, proclaim aloud what is their central motive: "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain." When Paul appeared before Gallio, the proconsul would willingly have listened to any matter of ethics or brotherhood, had these been in dispute: he

reckoned as "words and names" all that the apostle cared for. History has judged between them: to Gallio a suicide's grave, his name a term of reproach; to Paul a martyr's crown, and a place in the hearts of men nearest to that of his Lord.

The Pauline epistles are the most universally accepted, but from the standpoint of the biographer of Jesus the least informing, of the New Testament writings. Exactly the reverse is true of the Fourth Gospel, around which rages a stern struggle of the schools, but which, if we accept it, must be given an importance second to none. So large a literature in ancient and modern times has gathered round the problems of its authorship and historical value that it is most difficult to deal shortly with the subject. That it differs almost beyond reconciliation from the Synoptists in matters of fact, both in details such as the date of the Last Supper and in larger issues such as the length and locality of the ministry, is unquestionable—but it is not all, or nearly all. Far more important is that this whole portrait of Jesus, the method of His teaching, the character of

His discourses, the scope of His authority, the purpose of His life, the ground of His betrayal, is startlingly unique. In the Synoptists the message of Jesus is "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"; in St. John His message is "I am the Way, walk ye in it": in the Synoptists He speaks in short aphorisms, simple and practical, or in parables, "that hearing they may hear and may not understand"; in St. John He delivers long mystic discourses, and does not hesitate to "show men plainly of the Father": in the Synoptists, after months of patient training, He obtains from Peter the confession "Thou art the Christ"; in St. John from first to last He makes the claim Himself: in the Synoptists His death follows upon the betrayal of the Messianic secret; in St. John its cause is the raising of Lazarus and the consequent dismay of the Sadducean hierarchy which denied a future life. The contrast has been emphasised by two generations of recent scholars, and was stated with force and intelligence as early as the third century. What are we to infer from it?

The conclusion to which at first sight it

points is plain enough. Repeated attempts to construct a harmony of the Gospels have emphasised the difficulty of reconciling the discrepancies in events. The most superficial study convinces us of the difference in spirit. If the Synoptists describe Jesus as He was upon earth, St. John's portrait conflicts with theirs beyond compromise: one or the other must be abandoned. That is the verdict to which most students find themselves driven. And indeed, even if we give up the historicity of the Fourth Gospel, it will still have for us a very real value. The book itself suggests that it was written by one whose experience had resembled that of St. Paul, one who not having himself actual knowledge of the earthly life of Jesus had taken the central doctrine of an incarnate and crucified Saviour, had been enthralled by the vision which that doctrine unveils, had found the parables and paradoxes of the Synoptists perplexing, and had set himself to construct from the rich materials of a life of devotion an interpretation of his Lord which should reveal Him to men as Himself the answer to all their needs, at once the source and consummation

of their hope. Love for Jesus makes possible the fulfilment of the Sermon on the Mount; love for Jesus is the "mystery of the Kingdom of God"; love for Jesus supplies the key to all the parables; love for Jesus brings Him back to men in a true Second Advent; these things, these veils and signs, may be swept away from the records of Him, that love may have its fitting place. The Gospel is spiritual, spiritualised; and its value is determined rather by the depth of its author's devotion than by the defects in his literal accuracy.

That, or something like that, would represent very sketchily the conclusion of a conservative critic. He would admit that Jesus was not in fact like the Johannine portrait, that the author could not have been the beloved disciple: but he would maintain that Jesus is in experience like this, and that the author from the richness of his experience may fairly claim to be the beloved of Him whom he knows so intimately in spirit. Who precisely he was; how he came to write this wonderful book in the relaxing atmosphere of the second century; how his book came

to be accepted by a Church whose leaders, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Irenaeus, all claimed close connection with a St. John and were all on guard against anything that savoured of esoteric religion; such questions our critic will brush aside as irrelevant, or will try to answer by vague assertions as to the poverty of the evidence: for New Testament critics seem mostly to know little and care less about Church History, or indeed anything outside their special subject.

It is this lack of precision as to the provenance and occasion of the Fourth Gospel that first arouses one's suspicions, and makes one wonder whether an easy hypothesis like that which we have given is really quite satisfactory. After all, the old-fashioned scholars like Westcott were not men of one idea and one speciality; and the orthodox account as developed by them is to the historian of the early Church very much less difficult than its more advanced successor. It is easy to understand that a Gospel, even if it conflicted with previous Gospels, even if it contained a portrait of Jesus which might seem favourable to Gnosticism, would be

accepted without dispute if its author were St. John. It is exceedingly hard to believe that it would have been accepted at all by an age which was not rich in the spiritual insight necessary for its appreciation, if it had come from any less authoritative source. Certainly the problem is one on which we are entitled to press for an answer. It cannot be lightly dismissed with airy talk about "the middle of the second century" or "the spiritualising tendencies of the time." For it is after all a question of dates. There were men then living who were very watch-dogs of the traditions committed to them; men whose whole case against heresy was based upon the permanence and consistency of the Catholic witness. To one who knows their attitude of obstinate conservatism, it is simply inconceivable that Irenaeus writing before 200 A.D. should have accepted four Gospels as no less securely established than the four quarters of heaven, the four winds of God, if one of these Gospels, and that the most divergent in style and contents, and the least in harmony with his own outlook, had been written well within his own

active life-time, "some time between 130 and 150 A.D.," and in a district with which he and his fellow-churchmen were intimately acquainted, "the neighbourhood of Ephesus." It simply will not do. Our credulity will not stand the strain.

And when once we have seen reason to doubt our critical friends, we shall remember that there are many, very many, points in the Gospel itself on which their hypothesis makes shipwreck. The knowledge of Jewish customs and localities is at once fuller and more accurate than that of the Synoptists—a curious fact if the Gospel was written eighty years after the destruction of Jerusalem. The vitality and vividness of the descriptions in some of the scenes, the little touches which give so graphic a setting to the discourses, are as spontaneous, as natural, as anything in St. Mark. The sympathetic treatment of men like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea is vastly more convincing than the unrelieved condemnation of "Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." The date of the Cleansing of the Temple or of the Last Supper, and the three years of the Ministry can be

defended at least as easily as the Synoptic alternatives to them. Even the Raising of Lazarus which is generally reckoned the crux of the matter, unless it is to be rejected on the *a priori* ground that "the dead rise not at all" or on the equally unproved assumption that St. Mark's framework is rigid and complete, has this much to be urged in its favour, that it supplies the most adequate explanation both of the sudden eagerness of the Sadducees to remove Jesus by a hurried trial on a libellous charge, and of the hesitation of the Pharisees who like Gamaliel and Saul of Tarsus admired Him for refuting their rivals and took no part in His condemnation, but left Him to the test of the cross and despised Him when having refused to come down from it He fell under the curse upon "every-one that hangeth on a tree."

And if these and similar points refer us back to the traditional account, it must also be admitted that the general style and quality of the Gospel is exactly such as might have come from the old man who was in his youth the beloved disciple. It is the very essence of love that it picks out certain trivial scenes

in fullest detail and forgets the greater public happenings which form the landmarks in our outward careers; that it embellishes and transfigures each least action with a glory borrowed from its rich knowledge of our highest selves; that it reads into our words, and reproduces as if spoken, those half-conscious thoughts which represent us more truly than our speech; that it sees us in all our relationships as it knows us to be at our best. This is exactly what has happened with St. John. He pays little heed to the externals of his Friend's life. He has perhaps forgotten the sequence of events. He has lost sight of the development of the ideas. He seldom recalls details for their own sake, dwelling only upon those which have contributed to his realisation of the nature of Jesus, those which are prophetic of the truth that fuller understanding has revealed. He does not want to remember the stages of his growing knowledge. He cares for nothing save the perfect vision, the completed portrait of the Beloved. He sees Him in a few never-to-be-forgotten pictures, Jesus as they found Him at the well, or Jesus as He stood by the

grave of Lazarus, vividly, yet always the same, revealing new aspects of His changeless loveliness. He hears Him not in the broken fragments of an actual speech, but upon the great occasions, whether of controversy or of self-revelation, into which he has gathered up all that love can know and tell of the mind of Jesus. And in these sayings and doings of his Lord he is constantly finding something symbolic, something allegorical. The small action, the slight phrase, though at the time perhaps little understood, is now recognised as rich in deeper meaning, is now seen to have foreshown what a life-time of experience has discovered and verified. St. John, clinging through the years to the memory of Jesus, has pierced the veils and disclosed the secrets. God's great mystery can be given to men, not, as it was first presented to the world, an enigma for each to solve as best he could, but as it has now been revealed by Love itself to the beloved disciple.

The result may not be history, if history be only a matter of names and dates, a literal transcript of exact utterances, a mechanical

photograph of outward happenings. But if what really matters is the personality behind the facts, if we are to pass from the particular to the general, from isolated effects to their underlying cause, if in fact we are to follow the modern scientific method, then this Gospel, bearing upon its every line the marks of an insight that love alone can give, must be to us the history above all histories. It is of small account if age has blurred the author's memory, so that like all old men he mixes the events of one year with those of another. At least it has sharpened, as age does sharpen, his remembrance of those golden moments. It has clarified his vision of that splendid Friend. It has brought the picture into its true tone and perspective; for all that is irrelevant or misleading has faded, and left in brighter relief the abiding impression of the one central fact, the one supreme Person.

Yet while we accept St. John's Gospel as a record compiled many years after the events and composed of scenes whose spiritual significance has imprinted them upon his memory, while we allow that the style of it is every-

where coloured by his subsequent experience, we must not let the contrast between him and the Synoptists blind us to the many striking details of resemblance. Thus for example, although a comparison with St. Mark leaves upon us the conviction that the later Gospel was written quite independently, there are a number of small touches both in the parallel passages and elsewhere which show a remarkable similarity. The minute description of the ointment of nard is a good instance of a graphic detail which the two evangelists have in common. So is the use of the rare word ἐμβριμᾶσθαι applied by them both to a particular emphatic sound or gesture, apparently characteristic of Jesus —a word that St. Luke perhaps from motives of reverence omits. Other examples of a similar kind go to show that the divergence of St. John, great as it is, must not be exaggerated.

The most striking case of this resemblance, a case whose significance can hardly be overstated, is furnished by the "Agalliasis" utterance in Q, to which reference has been made in the previous lecture.[1] No one reading these

[1] Mt. xi. 27 and Lk. x. 22, quoted on p. 52.

verses and especially the concluding words, "All things have been entrusted to me by my Father, and no one knoweth the Son save the Father, and no one knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him," in ignorance of their source, would hesitate to ascribe them to St. John. Not only do they closely resemble actual sayings in the Fourth Gospel, but their whole tone and spirit is in harmony with what is reckoned typically Johannine. The passage is obviously an outburst of self-revelation, spoken in a moment of intense emotion, such as we must suppose that Jesus habitually concealed from all but those with whom He was in the closest sympathy. It shows to us a side of His character which may well have been little known or at least little understood by the Synoptists, but with which a beloved disciple must have been uniquely acquainted. Such a note of intimacy and exaltation is of the kind which would dominate St. John's conception of His friend, and its occurrence in Q provides an independent witness to the truth of the portrait which he has painted, and goes far to guarantee

the genuineness of the great discourses which are its natural expansion. We have in it a glimpse of Jesus in a moment of rapt communion with His Father. We should expect to find that such moments, though too sacred to be revealed to strangers, were yet a large and essential part of the consciousness of our Lord. St. John knew and has recorded that it was so. If he has shown us this element more freely than a literal transcript of the public discourses would have done, if he has interpreted the whole ministry from this standpoint, surely by doing so he has only made plain from what source came the authority that all men recognised. He has brought to light the hidden springs of our Saviour's power, and enabled us to understand the spirit which inspired and dominated the events of the Synoptic record. He has shown us the very soul of the Christ.

We conclude then that on grounds both of historical and of literary criticism we can accept the traditional account of the Fourth Gospel and use it along with St. Mark and Q and St. Luke for the study of the life of Jesus. We shall of course rely mainly upon

the Synoptists while we are trying to understand the impression that the new teaching made upon its first hearers, or the conditions of the public ministry of our Lord, or the aspects of His character that appealed most forcibly to the bulk of His followers. But we shall be able to supplement and explain their account from the standpoint of St. John, the standpoint, that is, of one who having known the historic Jesus when He went in and out among men recognised in Him also the lineaments of the eternal Christ.

The benefit of our acceptance of the Fourth Gospel will be found to consist not least in this last-mentioned consideration. Scholars who admit only St. Mark and St. Paul as first-hand evidence of the origin of Christianity find it no easy task to reconcile them. The wild theories, which divorce Jesus from Christ and represent St. Paul as the founder of the new religion, assume that the connection between the prophet of Nazareth and the suffering Saviour-god was accidental and unhistorical, that the Christ-myth, of which they profess to find wide traces, existed before the birth of Jesus, and that the

followers of the Crucified would never have obtained more than a local and temporary influence unless the genius of Saul of Tarsus had clothed their crude tenets in the mythological language of the Christists. The extreme forms of this opinion, although much misdirected learning has been squandered upon them, only go to prove into what nonsense men can be led by their dislike to the faith: we can afford to be amused at them. But none the less this tendency towards creating an antithesis between actual and ideal, between Jesus and Christ, has infected a large number of serious students, and is indeed the chief error of advanced criticism. And for this tendency the acceptance of St. John's Gospel is a sure remedy. For in him our Lord is at once Jesus and Christ, actual and ideal, at once the man whom the Synoptists described and the redeemer on whom St. Paul believed. In him there is no sense of contrast. He had found the Messiah come out of Nazareth, and he had recognised in that Messiah the Word made flesh come forth from God. If we are surprised that the Son of Man in St. Mark

with His limited knowledge, His intense nationalism, His Jewish mentality, His apocalyptic dreamings, should have been accepted as the Saviour of the world, St. John's record removes our surprise by showing us the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. If we are inclined to question whether the world-philosophy, the redemptive scheme, of St. Paul ever had any place in the mind or any connection with the work of Jesus, St. John answers our questions by exposing the common source of the theology and the history, the intimate relationship of the one with the other.

So far then our survey of the material which a modern student can use for the study of the Founder of his faith has led us to this result, that the critical method, the strict examination of each book and the refusal to accept anything on *a priori* grounds, leaves us with a considerable mass of evidence tested and available. Though we think it right to reject certain later elements in the First Gospel and to attach varying degrees of authority to the matter that we accept, it is still true that the vast majority of the

traditional records can be employed. In the question of the Fourth Gospel critical opinion is still, and is likely to remain, sharply divided, though a compromise somewhat on the lines that we have suggested is getting more and more usual. In other respects our conclusions are not widely different from those of the majority of students.

But if modern higher criticism leaves us with this very ample documentary evidence for the life of Jesus, why is it that the critics are treated with mingled wrath and pity by most men of commonsense—why is it that the Church has largely repudiated them? It is not, as we have seen, in their application of the scientific method to the study of the New Testament: for this leaves the sacred writings not indeed unscathed, but still largely undamaged. Rather is it, I believe, in the next stage, in their handling of the material thus tested, that their great failing appears. It is necessary for us to examine this carefully, since it affects nearly all modern attempts to construct a life of Jesus, and is responsible for that whittling away of the evidence which is characteristic of so much advanced research.

The basal weakness of modern scientific theology—a weakness which is by no means absent from other fields of study—seems to be due to the misuse or exaggeration of the dogma of progress by alternatives. Whatever the Hegelians may say as to the philosophy of this method of *entweder-oder*, it has exercised a baneful influence when applied to practical issues. For it can scarcely arrive at anything except that most dangerous of falsehoods a half-truth. Let us suppose that a champion of this method is discussing the quality of the colour grey. He will rack his brains until he arrives at the brilliant dictum that grey is either black or white. Whereupon, since both of two alternatives cannot be true, he will conclude with the blandest self-satisfaction that grey is black—or perhaps that it is white! We have begun to learn that even in party-politics this kind of procedure does not always produce the best results. Yet it has been applied in all its crudeness in very many branches of research. In biology, for example, we have or had very lately one school maintaining the Darwinian theory that evolution is the

result of perpetual slight variation from the type, the extent of this variation being determined according to the laws of natural selection; while another school, following Mendel and De Vries, believes that change comes from alteration or regrouping of the factors in the germ and that in consequence progress consists in the sudden appearance of a new type after a period wherein no variation has occurred. Each school supports its views by a mass of accurate observations, and to the layman it appears obvious that there is ample room for both theories, or at least that neither of them by itself fits all the facts. But the experts would not have it so. Either one or the other must be true and universal.

In theology this pernicious method has dominated German students almost entirely, and has infected the learned of this country in proportion as they have come under Teutonic influence—that is very widely indeed. Dr. Schweitzer, the author of that most startling and in some ways most remarkable book *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, gives a clear statement of his faith when he says,

"Progress always consists in taking one or other of two alternatives, in abandoning the attempt to combine them"; [1] and his whole history of German criticism is arranged to illustrate this thesis. He shows how during the last century various antitheses have been propounded—miraculous or non-miraculous, Johannine or Synoptic, liberal or apocalyptic—and how in each case progress has been made by rejecting the first-named. It is not altogether surprising that after this ruthless holocaust the final product is a theory of Jesus which has all the perverted ingenuity, all the colossal assurance, and all the occasional brilliancy of Bedlam, and even so does not succeed in being true to sound critical principles, since it depends largely on texts from the least authentic portions of "St. Matthew." Only one further step can be taken, and that is to eliminate the sole remaining alternative and to deny that Jesus ever existed at all. Dr. Drews is the logical successor of Dr. Schweitzer, and of the two probably gives less offence to the commonsense and conscience of Christians.

[1] English translation, *The Quest of the historical Jesus*, p. 237.

This "rake's progress" of the seekers after the historic Jesus supplies one more melancholy example of the fatal ease with which the German mind becomes obsessed with an idea, and fosters it to the verge of monomania. But the evil effects of this doctrine of alternatives are not confined to Germany. Recent study of the New Testament has everywhere been far too ready to collect points of contrast between two different books, and when sufficient have been accumulated to argue from them that one of the books must be rejected altogether. No doubt it is partly mere reaction against the traditional method which treated all Scripture as of equal authority and descended to quibbles and subterfuges in order to harmonise contradictions. But the result has been a very general willingness to sacrifice St. John, a notable effort to array St. Mark and Q against one another as if they were inevitably opposed, and a consequent tendency to construct lives of Jesus on the basis of one rather than all the available sources of knowledge. When applied to Jesus Himself the effect is to represent Him either as a mild and ecstatic

visionary or as a preacher of righteousness and social reform, as a stern and fanatical revolutionary or as a mistaken but majestic superman, according as emphasis is laid upon one side of the evidence to the exclusion of everything else. Indeed it is probably fair to say that a critic's presuppositions as to the character of Jesus have in many cases influenced his attitude towards the sources, and that textual studies have been forced into the service of schools of doctrine. Thus the Ritschlian school, whose interest in Christology has lain chiefly upon the ethical and humanist side, has been characterised by its devotion to the lost document Q and its insistence upon the priority and importance of the practical and social teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. On the other hand, Catholic modernists, who attach to facts of faith a value almost as great as to facts of history, and lay stress upon the Christ of the Church rather than upon the Jesus of the Gospels, are inclined to welcome the theories of the eschatologists, to base their views upon St. Mark, and to question the very existence of Q.

Such a diversity in modern appreciations of the work and life of our Lord is full of significance. That scholars of profound learning can disagree so widely, and support their opinions with a weight of argument, should be by no means disconcerting to the believer. For this quality of many-sidedness in the appeal of Jesus has been characteristic of Him from the very first, and moreover is exactly what we should expect to find in Him if He was what His followers acclaimed Him to be. In the documents of the New Testament, in the experience of the early Church, and in the religious life of our own time we find everywhere His curious adaptability and universality of appeal. Not only does Jesus satisfy that great need which all men share, the need for something, someone to love and worship; but He satisfies the individual and peculiar yearnings and ideals of all peoples and languages, all sorts and conditions of men. St. Paul claimed that in Christ Jesus was neither Greek nor barbarian, bond nor free, male nor female: for in Christ Jesus all these found the answer to their special difficulties, the goal of their particular

endeavour. So it has always been. The motley population of the Roman Empire and the wild tribesmen who plunged the Empire into chaos, the Jesuit and the Puritan, the Quaker and the Catholic, the Pope, the Kaiser and the President of the United States, all these have found in Christ something to correspond to their own outlook and have acknowledged with their lips, if not always in their lives, His claim upon their loyalty. It is the reproach of His Church that it has been unable to use this great bond of fellowship to the full, that it has divided Christ and allowed men to say I am of Peter or I am of Apollos. But the vision of membership and unity still stands; and every new believer, as he proves in his own life the variegated richness of Jesus, testifies afresh to the possibility of that vision being fulfilled.

Are we then to surrender this attribute of many-sidedness so familiar to Christian experience? Was the character of Jesus in reality simple and definite? Can we extract from any one of our sources a portrait which can be readily classified in the category of

prophet or reformer, preacher or visionary ? Shall we explain the appearance of complexity as arising from the readiness of men to attach to His name the projection of their own imaginings, the qualities of their own ideal ? Modern criticism on the whole would answer Yes. For the critic does not hesitate to place Him in one of these classes, justifying his action by pleading that he draws his conclusions from the oldest and only reliable source. Can we accept this verdict ?

The objection to doing so is twofold. We have already seen that there is good reason for accepting not one but several of the documents as substantially early and reliable, and that the most acute scholarship is divided as to the priority of them. But a more fatal objection is this. If each of the several sources gave us a consistent and distinct portrait of Jesus, if it was true that St. Mark's account differed entirely from that of Q, or that the Johannine Christ was totally unfamiliar to us elsewhere, then our critic's conclusion would have much in its favour. In sober fact the antithetical treatment is belied by the very contents of the documents.

The Jesus of St. Mark manifests Himself in works of power, but the Jesus of Q heals the centurion's servant. The Jesus of Q preaches social righteousness and pronounces a blessing upon the poor, but the Jesus of St. Mark says, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God." The existence of the "duplicate" sayings, and the fact that a case can be stated to show that St. Mark used Q, prove how impossible it is to disentangle the two or to describe Jesus exclusively in terms of one of them. As we have seen, even in St. John, where there is admittedly much larger divergence, the student is confronted with many details which prevent him from producing a clean-cut contrast. There are differences certainly; but so there are wherever witnesses are independent, since no two men will describe even the simplest thing in identical words, especially if they know it well. But underlying and along with the differences there is a constant harmony in principles and a frequent resemblance in details, which bear all the marks of spontaneity and suggest if they do not prove that the pictures are

complementary rather than contradictory. In St. Mark and Q the record has the quality of a photograph accurately reproducing the outward appearance of its subject. In St. John the evangelist's insight and personality have enabled him to give us a portrait, lacking perhaps in minute exactness, but revealing all the more truly the inner significance of Jesus. We can use each of them to interpret the other; it is by noticing what they have in common, and studying their differences with due regard to the known characteristics of their authors, that we shall obtain a worthy likeness of the Son of Man.

It is true that the task of constructing a complete synthesis from this varied material may be beyond our powers, that much will appear paradoxical and hard to understand, that the complexity of His appeal makes it well-nigh impossible to sum up His character in a few concise phrases. There remains the impression that we can after all only grasp certain features of Him, that the whole is too great to be measured by our instruments, to be mapped by our skill. But even so the difficulty arises not so much from the

diversity of the sources as from the quality of their subject. If we cannot easily synthesise the Jesus of St. Mark and the Jesus of St. John, this will dismay us less when we realise that we can hardly synthesise the Jesus of either of them separately. In each of our authors there appears the same sense of unrealised largeness. We feel that they have only seen glimpses and given us fragments, and that even so, until we know the whole, these fragments cannot be fully classified or explained, and may present an appearance of inconsistency. We cannot, I believe, grasp fully how the same Jesus is at once the gentle shepherd and the stern judge; how His precept that we should turn the other cheek to the smiter can be combined with His castigation of those who made their proselytes twofold more the children of Gehenna than themselves. But in these very contrasts there is a convincing sense of fitness. They may elude our logic, but they satisfy our instincts. We feel that if Jesus remains mysterious, His mystery is the mystery of our world; that if we cannot reconcile His love with His justice, it is

because we cannot solve the riddle of human freedom and responsibility; that if we find paradoxes in Him, it gives Him at once an affinity with the entirety of things. Like the universe He contains elements that rise beyond the synthetic powers of our logic: like the universe He presents to different temperaments a differing aspect and appeal: like the universe He somehow convinces us that the inconsistency is ultimately not in Him but in us: like the universe He inspires us with the yearning and the hope that at length we may see Him as He is.

After all to assume that we can make an easy harmony of the character of Jesus, or to argue that the accounts of Him where they diverge must cease to be equally life-like, is to expect in Him a simplicity that we do not find in any other personage of history. Socrates as he appears in Xenophon and in Plato, Charles Stuart martyr and tyrant, Napoleon superman and ogre, Wilhelm war-lord and baby-killer, every small statesman, every unit amongst us, does at the last defy full definition. Each has this faculty of impressing others in different

ways, with varying effects. And the more obviously a man surpasses his biographers, the more inevitable is it that their portrait will be partial. Peter and Matthew, Paul and John, came to the Christ like travellers to a mighty mountain. To one it presented a gracious slope of cloud-shaded turf; to another a rugged escarpment, frowning precipitous; to another a wonderland of glorious colour and illimitable vistas. Each could but see and describe that which he had known from the standpoint of his own experience in the language of his own tongue. None of them reached the summit, where it lies above the clouds in the changeless sunshine, remote, invisible, until at last the mists are rolled away.

It is with this conception of the majesty and universality of the Lord, this conception which led the most mystic of the early Alexandrians to name Him the "many-coloured wisdom of God," that we would close this lecture. For it is to this that the examination of our sources first leads us; and it is in its failure to appreciate this that we trace the gravest weakness of the modern search for the historic Jesus.

LECTURE FOUR

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS

The conclusion to which we came in the last lecture was that the most striking quality of Jesus that is revealed by the study of the material preserved for us in the pages of the New Testament is His many-sidedness. Not only in the different authors but even in the different scenes we see displayed a variety of attributes, each in itself familiar to us, but so commonly found in our experience to be mutually exclusive that we have come to regard them as incompatibles. The high courage which could not only face personal suffering but disappoint the hopes of beloved disciples and drive the sword through a mother's heart, would seem inconsistent with the keen sense of pity which wept for Lazarus and the imaginative insight into physical

misery which marked a life of healing. The brilliant wit that retorted "Render unto Caesar the things of Caesar" would spring in us from a certain hardness and detachment and be the very opposite of the magnetic sympathy that made Him the friend of sinners. Tenderness and aggressiveness, modesty and majesty, delight in domestic detail and ability to grasp the scheme of things entire, these qualities differ in us as female from male. In Jesus and in Jesus alone they are combined in fullest measure but with strict equipoise. He lacks none of the attributes which go to make up human excellence: He unites in Himself what else seem irreconcilables.

Hence it is that we cannot classify Him as we classify others. Our many heroes are either men of action or men of thought, warriors or statesmen, artists or philosophers, devotees or mystics. Even the most versatile, a Leonardo or a Julius Caesar, have their defects—defects which seem inevitable because they are the very complement and condition of their virtues. We can analyse and describe them, can trace the influences of race or education upon them, can even feel that we

ourselves fall into one or other of the classes of which these great ones are the supreme types. But Jesus stands apart from all this. He is neither reformer nor revolutionary, martyr nor miracle-worker, religious genius nor mystic visionary, neither the supreme example of womanly tenderness nor the perfect pattern of manly courage. He is all and more than all these. He gathers up into Himself all that we can dream of human loveliness. All the shades of colour, all the varied rays, that make up the spectrum of our life, belong to Him and are in Him blended into a radiant whiteness. His foes have for generations tried to find blemishes, to criticise and to defame : their efforts, where they have been honest, have resulted in self-confessed failure. His followers have for centuries in sermon and biography striven to appraise and portray : with one voice they admit the inadequacy of their attempts. We see and study—and worship.

It is not the purpose of this lecture to add one more to the number of the " lives " of Jesus. We are simply concerned with the answer that we shall give to the question,

"What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" In the second lecture we saw how impossible it was for us to foreclose enquiry by giving at once the traditional answer and confessing Him to be the Son of God. The student must take up and make his own the response of the Jews, "He is David's son"—the Son of Man. To do otherwise is to destroy the value of the Incarnation, since, if we start by segregating Jesus into a category by Himself and by attaching to Him qualities that transcend our nature, we shall sacrifice our chance of understanding what He came to teach, and so shall undo for ourselves His work as a revealer of God. The gist of the Christian claim is that in Jesus, in a man upon the earth, is to be found a reproduction of the divine, and that as we study and love Him so we shall ourselves become transfigured into the likeness of Him and of the God whose nature He reproduces. We can only study, only love Him intelligently and effectively, if we assume that He was of the same species with us. In the third lecture we saw that from the survey of our authorities there emerged a doubt as to the appropriateness of

our first answer, "the son of David." There appeared from the records certain attributes which establish an analogy between Jesus and the Universe, and evoke from us the response of wonder. "How is it that David in spirit, that mankind speaking under the influence of its highest impulses and instincts, calls Him Lord ?"

Before we go on to attempt our answer, it will be well to emphasise at once three aspects of Jesus which strike us as supremely wonderful, and, if we are to understand Him, supremely important—His freedom from the limitations of heredity and environment ; His readiness to spend Himself utterly in love for others ; His claim to be at one with God as Christ, the Son.

And first this independence, this originality and mastery, which His contemporaries called ἐξουσία,[1] and which impressed them as it impresses everyone upon first contact with Jesus. We shall appreciate it most clearly if we recall the marvel of His early years—that the folks from whom He sprang were

[1] Applied both to His works of healing (Mk. i. 27) and to His teaching (Mt. vii. 29).

Jews, the most true-to-type and in some respects the narrowest of the races of mankind; that His birth and upbringing were obscure and unpropitious; that His mother misunderstood and His brethren distrusted Him; that His training was that of an artisan; that for thirty years His gifts were exercised, His loveliness confined, within the walls of a remote and despised village. Human ingenuity could hardly have produced anything more startlingly inappropriate—least of all in these days when it is the habit to pore over the pedigrees of the great, when a school of thinkers would have us believe in the scientific breeding of superior types, and when hygienic cranks beset our infancy and educational experts work havoc with our boyhood.

The contrast between the Master and His great disciple heightens our astonishment still more. St. Paul had all those seeming advantages that Jesus lacked, social status as a Roman citizen, liberal education at a Greek university town, religious training in all that was best in Rabbinism. Here is a man well-fitted indeed to play a leading part, a chosen

vessel shaped by many hands for its special function and bearing always the form which those hands have set upon it. For in all his life we can trace the influences of his youth. At one time he is the Roman, with his broad imperialism, his respect for ordered government, his insistence upon the duty of civil obedience: anon he is the Greek, with his veneer of philosophy, his tags from the poets, his sporting slang from the gymnasium, his nimbleness in the fencing-school of words: always he is the Jew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, glorying in the privileges of his race or grief-stricken that his brethren have rejected the greatest of those privileges. Contrast all this with Jesus, with Him in whom is neither Jew nor Greek, who combines in Himself the qualities of all peoples and both sexes, who coming from the carpenter's shop has carried no savour of it into His life's work, of whom His disciples throughout the ages have found it hard to remember that He is not of their own time.

It is indeed the fashion nowadays to emphasise the differences between His language and ours, and to use all the skill of the caricaturist

in depicting Him as a Jew of the first century. Such protest is valuable as an antidote to the conventional treatment which divorced Him from His age, stripped Him of His humanity, and sought to find in His teaching a specific solution for every problem. It is true that He may have thought or said that David wrote the 110th Psalm, it is true that His attitude towards disease is not what we should find in medical text-books, it is true that He adopted the imagery of His contemporaries in speaking of the state of man after death, it is possible that He accepted the conventions of the Apocalyptist writers to express His conception of the Kingdom of God —though (with due respect to Dr. Schweitzer and his following) the definitely Apocalyptic sayings are among the least authenticated of His recorded words.[1] Granted that we realise all this, granted that we admit the limitations imposed on Him by space and time, and glory in them as the proofs

[1] The great discourse (Mk. xiii. and parallels) is unique save for a few phrases occurring mostly in the First Gospel, and is regarded by many scholars either as an interpolated apocalypse or at least as highly coloured by the Jewish evangelist.

of His manhood, yet we must be on our guard against the exaggerations into which recent scholars have so palpably fallen. The revelation in Jesus was given under those conditions which we studied in our first lecture and which determine the whole method and scope of the divine self-revealing. But for all that it remains manifest that Jesus was free from those fetters rivetted before or after birth which we others carry to some extent at least throughout our lives.

And if this quality of independence appears most strongly from a consideration of His early years, it is no less marked throughout His life. Wherever we study Him, the same thing attracts us. He has what, for want of a better word, we call sincerity—the faculty of seeing things as they are, of appraising them with complete disregard for conventional standards or second-hand opinion, and of expressing without fear or affectation a direct, an intuitive, judgment upon them. He is never at a loss for a course of action, for an argument, for an illustration. He is always master of His surroundings, master of His fate. He proposes, but He also disposes.

This quality is easier to recognise than to define. In one aspect it is represented by what the Stoics called αὐτάρκεια or freedom from reliance upon anything external: as such it appears in that decisiveness or authority which so surprised His hearers when Jesus taught them "not as the Scribes." In another aspect it is the gift which enables a man to lay aside the spectacles of tradition and to gaze with naked eyes upon truth piercing through semblance to reality, the gift of the artist, the poet or prophet, for whom heaven and earth are ever revealing new secrets, the gift by virtue of which Jesus can take seemingly at haphazard any familiar event, any simple incident, and show in the parable of it a revelation of the mystery of God. To this faculty Jesus was referring when He said, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." For the child has this unspoiled freshness of vision, this intuitive judgment, this sureness of touch, this capacity for being naturally and happily at home whether in the palace or in the gutter, this power to create its own surroundings, to twist any material into the

substance of its own plans, innocent of worldly ambitions, indifferent to worldly values. And Jesus, the pattern as He was the revealer of the "child-soul," kept to the end this heavenly birth-right which we others lose or sell so soon. For Him there were no "shades of the prison-house": from Him the "clouds of glory" never faded. If we would once more prove the Master by comparing Him with His disciple, we can do so by contrasting His praise of those "whose angels do always behold the face of my Father in Heaven" with St. Paul's contemptuous boast "when I became a man I put away childish things."

Of the second point, the readiness of Jesus to spend Himself for others, there is little need to speak at length, since the Cross, the symbol of the love that seeketh not its own, has from the first been the emblem of Christendom. Yet because it is so familiar we must not allow ourselves to forget how revolutionary was this more excellent way. Only as we learn to understand pre-Christian ideals, the "righteousness" of the Jew, the "wisdom" of the Greek, does the new doctrine receive

its true homage of wonder. The revelation of the sincerity and freedom of childhood contradicts the standards alike of the law-abiding and conventional Israelite and of the self-cultured and sophisticated Hellene. The revelation that whoso loseth his life finds it, that to give and not to get is man's high destiny, that self-surrender and not self-development is God's plan for us, emphasises the same contrast of spirit. This was indeed a stumbling-block to those whose whole training fostered Pharisaism, and foolishness to those whose earliest motto was "Know thyself." It was, and is, a catastrophic discovery; for us who bring up our sons to "stand on their own feet" and "succeed in life," no less than for our unenlightened predecessors.

And Jesus not only laid down this principle: He fulfilled it in His life with a fixity of purpose, a scorn of consequence, and a measure of completeness, which we can but dimly appreciate. The Temptation-narrative, that fullest unveiling of His inward struggle, supplies the keynote. Deliberately and once for all He rejected comfort and power and popularity as means to His great end. He refused

to think of His physical needs: His body must be the servant of His will and expect no holidays. He refused to take the place to which His intellect and personality opened the way: it was not His aim to restore again the kingdom to Israel or to secure thrones for His followers. He refused to advertise His gifts or to test even for His own satisfaction the meaning of the divine approval: no sign shall be given, men shall not be forced to believe. And having refused these things, there remains for Him the way of the Cross —the way which will agonise His friends and delight His foes, which will make vast demands upon the faith and insight of His followers, which will be plain only to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

The decision that for Him and for His the cup that the Father has given must be drunk unsweetened and to the dregs cannot but appeal to our sense of the heroic. His love is so utterly free from sentimentality, from the weakness that seeks to save its friends from pain at any cost. We others are so ready to use the pretext of love to excuse our concessions to evil; to plead the joy of

our dear ones when we seek the rewards of success, to urge our anxiety to spare them when we shrink from sacrifice. Jesus might so easily, so plausibly, have allowed His mother's woe, His disciples' hopes to turn Him aside. Yet He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, although, as they followed Him, they were afraid. He might so naturally have condescended to the pathetic doubts of those who cried, "If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." What modern evangelist fortified by the consciousness that he was saving souls would have withheld the sign, refused the answer? Yet of Jesus it is said that He spake "all things in parables that seeing they may see and may not perceive and hearing they may hear and may not understand." How inconceivably hard must it have been, for that heart of love, so to love wisely. Is not this love of His in very truth a revelation of that love of God which wills to work through "Nature red in tooth and claw," which refuses to make wars to cease or to remit the consequences of a fault, which suffers the rebukes of its children when they find it hard and silent and cruel, which alters

not its purpose however much they gainsay or blaspheme? Jesus like God reveals Himself to us in parables, and when He has trained us to see in sowing or harvest, mustard-seed or leaven, the mystery of the Kingdom He confronts us with the parable of Himself —Whom say ye that I am? And according to the measure of our insight, of our response to His education of us, is it given to us to say, "The Christ of God."

In this as in all else His death is the epitome of His life. Knowing that only love can transform and redeem us from ourselves into the nature of the beloved, that one who stopped short of death, even the death of the Cross, would lack something of appeal, that only by giving Himself to the uttermost could He call out in us the response of utter devotion, He steeled Himself to clinch for ever the lesson which Peter had begun to learn when he made his confession; to illustrate in Himself His words, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone: but if it die, it beareth much fruit"; to consummate in one great act the work of His earthly life. He spared not

Himself: He spared not His followers. For Him the Cross and the terror of great darkness shrouding for a moment the radiance of His spirit: for them the agony of loss, the shame of betrayal, the furnace of self-discovery and self-contempt which should refine away all their selfishness. And so, because one who loses self in love for others cannot, does not, die, out of the clouds came the lightening, out of travail a new birth, out of the grave life eternal: for Him Easter, for them Pentecost.

There remains to be considered the third point, the claim put forward by Jesus to stand in a relationship of peculiar intimacy to God, to be in some sense Himself divine. The exact meaning conveyed to Jesus and His contemporaries by the titles "Son of Man," which He so regularly used of Himself, "Christ," which He definitely accepted from others, and "Son" or "Son the beloved" of the Father, which is employed both in St. Mark and in Q and is very frequent in St. John, need not be fully discussed here. For the present we may set aside also the problem of His personal pre-existence as raised

by such words as "before Abraham was I am," and leave unanswered the question whether any of these phrases are coextensive with the language of the Creeds or even of the Epistles. It is sufficient to notice that He professes to occupy a position quite distinct from that of the prophets, and that His conception of the Messiahship involved a nearness to God which, whatever its precise dogmatic interpretation, was that of a Son not a servant; that the consciousness of this position was the basis, the motive-power, of His ministry, since He set out systematically to gather the Twelve and to train them to recognise it, and prepared to die when once they had confessed Him; and that His claim was regarded by the Sanhedrin as so clear a violation of the Law, so obvious an encroachment upon the divine prerogative, that He was condemned and done to death for not repudiating it. So far the evidence is indisputable. How are we to explain it?

The old dilemma, "aut Deus aut homo non bonus," though perhaps fair is hardly adequate: for it omits the third possibility that, though neither divine nor a conscious and

guilty impostor, He was mistaken, sincerely mistaken, the victim of a delusion amounting to monomania. Even His enemies have by this time realised that to accuse Him of deliberate charlatanry is an act of folly which recoils upon themselves. The character of every syllable of His teaching, the sincerity of His whole outlook, and His readiness to be crucified for His belief would convince anyone save the few who are prepared to sacrifice their regard for truth to their passion for notoriety. Nowadays " homo non sanus " would be a more apposite version of the alternative. Was it all a ghastly blunder ? Was He led into an unconscious exaggeration of His spiritual experiences, a false explanation of His mission ? Must we call in the pathologists to account for Him ?

Two facts tell against this very strongly, His Jewish origin and the analogy of other saintly lives. That He was a Jew is immensely significant. In the first place, it implies that He was brought up to a full knowledge of the prophets and was well aware both that God had commissioned men from time to time to be the bearers of His word and that no

prophet had ever dared to assert a pre-eminence such as He gives to Himself in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. Why was He not content to place Himself on a level with them, following the tradition of His race and assuring to Himself a far more willing audience and a much greater chance of success ? Further, if on the positive side He had the example of the prophets, on the negative He had the full weight of the first three commandments. So lax and liberal a Jew as Philo of Alexandria risked his life on an embassy to implore the bloodthirsty Caligula to absolve the nation from the ritual act of loyalty. How could Jesus, trained in strict observance of the Law and keeping the Feasts, regard Himself as fit to teach or able to say, "I came not to destroy but to fulfil," when He was outraging racial sentiment and infringing the most sacred ordinance of the Decalogue ? If His claim was mistaken, we have a right to ask how the obsession could have arisen and been fostered. His origin and environment do not merely fail to provide an answer : they are scarcely reconcilable with the possibility of the hypo-

thesis. Madness might take the form of a claim to divinity in a Teuton or even in a Greek: in a Jew never.

Nor does the comparison of Jesus with others encourage the theory of delusion. The familiar type of megalomaniac which believes itself to be Napoleon or Julius Caesar or God Almighty has never in its most aberrant form produced a parallel to Jesus. There have been many false Christs and false prophets who were cheats and liars; some of them like Lucian's Peregrinus may even have suffered sooner than confess their deceit: but a genuine delusion, the fruit of disease, has never been combined, so far as we know, with sincerity, sympathy, and self-sacrifice, and with sanity on all other subjects; it has always betrayed itself by its pretentiousness and by the contrast between its professions and its practices. Jesus not only admitted that He was "the Son of the Blessed," but He lived a life which even His foes would generally allow to be not unworthy of the claim, a life utterly different from what a son of God would have been at that time expected to lead, a life of service

and self-denial without pride or pomp. So marked was this contrast that the pagan world, which was ready to make a legend of Nero or a cult of Antinous and might have been fascinated by a megalomaniac, shrank in disgust from the notion of a revelation in the person of a crucified Jew—and yet when they studied Him were convinced.

Here is the crowning wonder, that the life and character of Jesus will bear comparison with and be found to excel that of any of the saints; that man's whole experience of the path of holiness goes to show that the more closely he approaches to God the more deeply does he become conscious of sin; that in Jesus alone moral perfection is not accompanied by a sense of guilt. His life is one of unstained goodness, of humility in word and deed; and yet He calls Himself the Son of God. Contrast it with St. Peter's cry, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," or with St. Paul's anguished appeal, "Miserable man that I am, who shall redeem me from the body of this death?"; confirm it by reference to any and every sincere follower after righteousness; seek the traces of it in

our own hearts: everywhere the same thing happens. When man is at his highest, then he is most cognisant of his failure. The horizon is never so far distant, we are never so obviously weak, as when we are on the mountain-tops.

Once more St. Paul is the best foil to bring out the quality of Jesus. In his earlier letters the apostle is full of that rather self-assertive assurance which is so dear to the hearts of Protestants; he is convinced of his own salvation, that he has the mind of Christ. Even in Romans, where he so faithfully describes the war in his members, he is still confident and secure. How much less beautiful, how much less Christian, is his tone than in the epistles of the captivity, when as Paul the aged he rejoices and bids his converts rejoice, no longer because he is sure of himself or because the battle is won—"not that I have already obtained or already become perfect: but I press on." So do he and all the army of saints travel, so do they grow more and more aware of the gulf that separates them from their Lord, until at the end of their journey they join

with him in the confession of their faith, "This is a true saying and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

But in Jesus there is none of this. During the course of the ministry His sense of union with God becomes more firmly established, or is at least more freely proclaimed. Instead of consciousness of His own shortcoming there is the conviction that only acceptance of Him can save others. Even on the Cross, where for a moment under the stress of physical agony He shares our experience of separation from the Father, there is no suggestion that He has deserved to be forsaken, nothing that corresponds to our penitence. The First Evangelist indeed saw fit to paraphrase His reply to the rich young ruler, "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God," perhaps reading in it a repudiation. But there as elsewhere Jesus is only challenging the enquirer to read the parable of Himself, "You call me good: have you eyes to see? do you know me to be divine?" He is but emphasising the message of His whole life. It was upon the certainty

that any ordinary man could solve the riddle and solving it be transformed that He founded His Church; and so far His vision has been accomplished: the gates of hell have not prevailed against it.

We are not in these lectures directly concerned with Christian apologetics; so we need not insist upon the immense importance of the verdict of results on the claim of Jesus. However unsatisfying Pragmatism may have been as an ultimate philosophy, there can be no doubt that to the commonsense of mankind the test of fruits will always be supreme and final. The witness of Christian lives, the proved efficacy of faith in Christ, is far more persuasive than reams of argument. The Church in stating her case to the world will begin by producing the plain facts, that Jesus, whose ethical perfection and personal loveliness are scarcely disputable, claimed to be divine and was accepted as such by men of the only race on earth which was heavily biassed against belief in an incarnation; that this acceptance of Him was not only acknowledged by His followers to be the source of their power but did palpably transfigure their

lives; that in the strength of it they, a pariah sect of a pariah people, turned the world upside down; that through the ages this experience has been shared and confirmed by saints of all nations. Having submitted the evidence she will be entitled to insist that her own interpretation of it holds the field until her opponents can produce something more solid than *a priori* assumptions against it, until they cease to say, "It must be false because we don't like it," and condescend to face the testimony of history and furnish some better explanation of it.

But this is by the way. Our business now, having noted these three features of the life of Jesus, His sincerity, His sympathy, and His claim, is to essay an answer to the question of His nature. How is this life of His to be explained? Who is He who lived it? The subject naturally falls into those two sections—the interpretation of Him in terms of our own experience, so far as that will carry us, and the translation of it into terms of doctrine. We have to consider the Master firstly from the practical and then from the theological standpoint.

We have seen that in the character of Jesus there are two dominant traits, His sincerity, revealing itself in a marked control over His environment, in complete freedom from the trammels of convention or "respect of persons," in "authority" both in teaching and action; and His sympathy, the power of entering into His surroundings, of finding no demand upon His attention too small, no challenge to His self-sacrifice too great, the power of giving Himself fully and without stint, and so of living largely and richly.

There is about the combination something that savours of paradox. Independence generally implies detachment, aloofness, a cold and impersonal judgment, a mind unswayed by affection, undistorted by too close acquaintance with detail. A man who wishes to be a leader must not multiply human relationships, must cut himself loose from small entanglements. He must learn to think imperially, in abstractions, to adopt the professional attitude of the lawyer or the economist, to disregard individual and concentrate upon general problems. Too often he learns to see the wood only by losing sight of the

trees. Such a quality is the exact reverse of sympathy. For sympathy seems essentially an individual thing, connoting a warmth of affection, susceptibility to the feelings of others, desire to respond to their needs, to rejoice in their joys and grieve over their sorrows. We learn to give without reserve, to adapt ourselves quickly and easily to the circumstances of the moment. We are apt to forfeit our stability, to become as it were moral chameleons changing our own colour for that of our neighbours, moral spendthrifts squandering without wisdom. We forget the vision of the wood in the absorbing interest of the trees.

Yet in Jesus these two are combined without any sense of strain or unreality: and if we look deeper we shall see that the superficial contrast disappears. The third feature of His character explains and unifies them: for sincerity and sympathy flow from a common source; they are the twin branches of the river of His life—that river which springs from out the throne of God. To understand this is to get a glimpse of the meaning, the sphere and method, of His Godhead, and to go far towards visualising His nature.

That the contrast in any case is false is plain enough, as anyone who has ever tried to cultivate either virtue will have found out. We try to be sincere, and only succeed in becoming priggish, until we discover that we can best escape shams and become our natural selves by losing ourselves unaffectedly in others. As we get interested in them, we begin to see ourselves in more reasonable proportion, to care less about the correctness of our pose, to pay less heed to the applause of men, to become simple and single-minded, to gain something of the unselfconsciousness of a child. In the same way we can only love if we are able to be sincere and willing, as the saying is, to "give ourselves away." If we keep back part of the price while making great protestations, we merit the doom of those who lied against the Holy Ghost. To win love we must not spare ourselves, we dare not give less than our all. Anyone who has ever tried to preach, to "win souls" as it is vulgarly called, knows how often the most imposing efforts fail, the most eloquent pleadings fall on deaf ears: as Christ's shepherd he has yearned over these sheep—and they

have chosen the wolf in his stead. Of course they have fled from him; and while he seeks souls as a Red Indian sought scalps for his own glory, they will always flee. Only from time to time he finds that at some forgotten moment, when he had lost thought of his own importance in the love of the Master or of His flock, words had been spoken in which was power, the power of sincerity and sympathy by which alone the world can be won. The two are inseparables, correlatives, and go together: we must have both or neither.

And in the lives of us all, I suppose, there have been times when we have had a share of both. At such times the scales fall from our eyes. We see truth clearly and impersonally, looking upon ourselves and our surroundings with a strange sense of their objectivity, beholding them for a span in perspective, in their proper place in the scheme of things, as parts of a vast whole; and yet along with this detachment we feel a curious sympathy not with our own selves only but with the whole so far as we can apprehend it, we seem to live in it all, in everything

that we have seen or known, to realise our environment not as something apart but as something within us. Set down thus in black and white the two, detachment and union, the sense of the objectivity of things and of their subjectivity, seem incongruous. Yet the paradox, if paradox it is, is true enough, as anyone who has experienced the mystic's ecstasy, or has been suddenly brought face to face with some crisis, with imminent death or overwhelming beauty or startling truth, will testify. Such things have the power to set us free, to give us entrance to a wider sphere, to alter the centre of our being, so that we become conscious of the life of a larger unit than ourselves, a unit of which we and all our world are part. Not ceasing to be ourselves we lose the limitations of our individuality. In a flash and for a space the problem of the one and the many has ceased to perplex: continuity and discontinuity have come into harmony. We are aware that they both exist; the individual has not been swallowed up in the universal; but it is no longer in contrast with it. The barriers fall, and we stand at the heart of

things, seeing them as they are, as one, and ourselves as an organic part of that oneness.

Under what circumstances and to what extent the veil is thus lifted will no doubt vary greatly with different people. Some perhaps are not conscious of having themselves experienced it—though in these days of Browning-worship few indeed will admit as much. Certainly it is as a consequence of ecstasy that this state is most familiar. After the "moment, one and infinite," when the spirit has been rapt into communion with eternity, there comes regularly a clearness of vision, an expansion of sympathy. We become intensely sensitive to the beauty around us, and yet much that before was beautiful now seems mean and soulless. We recognise pretence and unreality, and disclose in ourselves and in others scarce suspected springs of goodness. Actions that were once quixotic are now reasonable and necessary. Folks whom we have despised now attract our intimate regard and are transfigured before our eyes. We thrill with their emotions, respond to their thoughts, love them dis-

passionately but deeply, and glory in our knowledge of the close bond that knits us to them, them to us. Of course the splendour fades and we relapse into our old prejudiced narrow selves: but we have seen, and we never quite lose the vision.

Analogous to the effect of ecstasy is perhaps the case of those many who having come face to face with death bear the marks of it upon their souls thenceforward. About them there is a quite tangible reserve: we feel that they are not altogether of this world, but have a secret retreat of their own to which we have no access, from which they look out kindly but keenly upon us. We are ashamed to pose in their presence, for their eyes are full of truth and wonder like the eyes of a child. And yet they are rich in fellowship, delighting in simple pleasures, creating comradeship by the first grip of their hands, ringing true to each test, whole-hearted in loyalty to their friends, unstinting in their willingness to help, men of good-will. They, like the mystics, have seen God; and now see themselves and the world in the light of eternity.

Indeed in this matter of the relation of conduct to life it seems that we have only another illustration of that sacramental principle which Jesus emphasised by His use of parables and which as we have seen supplies the ground-plan on which our universe is built. So long as we accept the details of conduct as an end in themselves, and confine our vision to their due performance, "we do eat and drink our own damnation." If a man tries to be good, he may perhaps succeed in becoming a Stoic, strong, sad, and sterile, because self-centred, a Marcus Aurelius the father of a Commodus. If he tries to be religious, the highest that he can reach is to become a Pharisee, pious, priggish, and prurient, alternately self-contemptuous and self-satisfied, a Saul of Tarsus, the rebellious slave of duty and tradition. Only when man forgets self and self-culture, when he escapes from the cave of the shadows and is transported into the larger world where the wind of the Spirit blows and the light of God dazzles his sight, does he learn the meaning and proportions of his shade-kingdom. At the end of his pilgrimage he carries back

into the cave the knowledge of that other world and studies henceforward to fashion his doings after the pattern that was shown him on the mount. And if his soul is filled with the vision of things unseen, if he seeks first the Kingdom of God, then right conduct and all else shall be added unto him. He will be free from the Law and able to fulfil it. That is the truth which Moses and the prophets, which Plato and Paul and Jesus came to reveal, and which everyone who has seen God and lived can confirm.

It is with this concrete fact, that we have access to two spheres, the eternal and static as well as the temporal and kinetic, and that we can only employ our lives rightly in this world if they are set against a background, informed by a spirit, not of this world, that we are here concerned. The metaphors under which we have been describing it are those familiar to us all, the metaphors of illumination and ecstasy, of being caught up out of the body into the spirit, out of the realm of sense-perceptions into that of direct apprehensions, out of seeming into reality. The influence of Platonism and of the mystics,

as well as of Scripture and tradition, makes such language almost inevitable. But if it was necessary to explain the fact more scientifically, it would be well to translate it into terms of psychology and speak of a descent into a lower stratum of personality, of an escape from the narrow sphere of the conscious into the wider freedom of the subliminal. Certainly it is from research in this field that further light is most likely to be thrown upon the problem of the nature of man and thence upon our understanding of the Incarnation. But at present Dr. Sanday's work in this direction, courageous and interesting as it is, seems to show that psychologists have hardly yet reclaimed solid ground enough to provide a secure foothold for theology: and until their results are more assured and precise, it is better for any general enquiry to be content with less technical imagery. For our present purpose it is the experience and not the explanation of it that is important.

It is from the standpoint of this experience that we can, I believe, most readily interpret the nature of the Incarnate. Setting aside

metaphysical questions as to the eternal relation of Jesus to the Godhead, and refusing the chemical and material metaphors of the Greeks with their jargon of substances and attributes, of impersonal humanity and self-limited deity, we can use the analogy of our own illumination to help us to realise the sphere and method of His communion with the Father. For in Jesus, as we have seen, there is this paradox of detachment and union, of independence and sympathy, which we recognise as present fitfully and briefly in ourselves. He explained His own character by claiming to be one with God, and in us also similar effects are due to a like cause. We conceive of Him as living in an enjoyment of the divine presence which, if we can judge from His stainless and consistent "godliness," was unbroken save for a moment upon the Cross. He lived in constant touch with things eternal, and His earthly career is the interpretation in terms of conduct, in this world of movement, of His vision of eternity. We cannot with our rare flashes of illumination hope to appreciate the whole of Him: nevertheless that whole

strikes us as in full keeping with His position as Son of God: from our own little knowledge we can see the congruity of those elements in Him which we cannot parallel or analyse. He transcends us immensely: every honest student of His life admits that at once. But He transcends us as the perfect does the partial, as the image of God does those who are spoiled copies of that image. His oneness with the divine comes along the same lines and affects the same side of His nature as do our ecstasy and communion. We must reckon it a difference rather of degree than of kind.

Now that is almost certainly technical heresy, a specific error leading to disastrous consequences and amounting not merely to a denial of the language of the Creeds, but to a real loss of a vital element in Christianity. We may well be accused either of teaching that all men are potential Christs or of denying the divinity of Jesus, or at least of depriving Him of the religious value which depends upon His uniqueness and unlikeness to us. We must examine these charges one by one.

That the verbal alternative "either He differs from us in kind or in degree" has come to be a conventional test of orthodoxy is probably true. It is the sort of catch-phrase that is dear to the hearts of inquisitors, and has been a favourite instrument of theirs ever since its invention by the sophist Malchion in the third century. But as we saw in our survey of doctrinal history it has no claim to be primitive. Indeed until 269 A.D. Christians, Greek and Jewish alike, would have all repudiated it. So deep-seated was their belief in the analogy between Jesus and ourselves that even Athanasius writing his Apology, the *De Incarnatione*, fifty years after the change had been made, does not hesitate to urge the pagans to accept the divinity of Jesus on the ground that they already accept the divine inspiration of other men. The belief in a difference in degree held the field so long as Christianity had to rely upon its own reasonableness and not on state-aid for its success. And if right belief is to be judged by the standard of conformity with what is primitive, we shall have less to fear than our accusers. There

can be little doubt that the substitution of "kind" for "degree," though for the moment it served a useful purpose, was in the long run a mistake. For if pressed to its logical conclusion it involves a denial of the Incarnation, since a Christ who differs from us in kind is, however much we may try to disguise the fact by talking vaguely about impersonal humanity, simply not man at all. If He came to give to men the knowledge of God, we must assume that both teacher and lesson are intelligible to us, and if He is not man this will not be the case; for we shall have no analogy, no standards, by which to appraise or understand Him. There will be between Him and us a great gulf fixed, that ancient gulf between God and man which the Incarnation purported to have bridged; and we on the human side cannot then pass over it.

Nor shall we admit for a moment that, if Jesus transcends us in the fulness of His perfect manhood and not because He is physically other than human, this is equivalent to saying that all men are potential Christs. Difference in degree merely means that He

was very man, and that His union with His Father is to be interpreted under the same mode as ours. It rules out a conception of Him which either removes Him altogether from our species or makes of Him a kind of hybrid with elements in His nature wholly alien to humanity. It does not mean that we can or could ever be His equals, that our spasmodic flashes are capable of being extended into His continuous radiance. We are the "broken arcs"—and very small arcs: He is the "perfect round." And to say that because we can visualise Him as one of ourselves therefore we can be equated with Him is simply to be false to facts. Probably the best and plainest account of it is supplied by the language of Scripture. He is "the image of the invisible God," reproducing in our sphere the qualities pertaining to deity. We are "made in God's image," possessing in us that which corresponds to the divine. But between us and Him there remains this hard fact, that He reflects God clearly and without blemish, while our mirrors are cracked and distorted. We know separation from God, sin: He knows it not. The difference is not

the less real and insuperable because we call it a difference in degree. And there we should surely be content to leave it.

Whether a repetition of the marvel is possible either in fact or theory is a purely academic question, about which no human being has much right to dogmatise or many data for an answer. We shall do well to take the Master's own confession of ignorance as to the future for our example, refusing to be drawn into a pretentious display of assurance or to be wise beyond what is written ; and to accept His title " the only-begotten " as proof that He or at least St. John regarded His position as unique, confirming this by the plain fact that in history He stands alone, that the recorded experience of mankind can suggest no other name whereby men are saved. The more boldly we apply to Him our own standards, and approach His nature from our own standpoint, the more readily do we confess that " never man spake like this man " and that " this Jesus whom men crucified is God and Lord."

But in what sense God ? How are we to express Him in the language of theology ?

To answer such questions we must remind ourselves of the two conclusions that we have already reached, firstly that the eternal is also the infinite and therefore though we can apprehend it we cannot comprehend or describe it; and secondly that the historical attempt to read into Jesus the attributes of eternity, the physical as opposed to the moral qualities of Godhead, is a failure. If we are to understand God, we require a translation of the changeless Absolute into terms that our minds can grasp and our tongues tell: if we are to get help from Jesus, it must be because He gives us such a translation. So far as we can tell, communion with the infinite does not convey any education in matters belonging to the properly intellectual sphere: it does not teach us science or languages or lift us out of the ideas of our own time in such matters. What it does bestow is a knowledge of the oneness and goodness of things, and a standard of values in ethical questions proceeding from that knowledge and showing itself in an escape from the prison of self and a realisation of our fellowship with others, in a power to understand

and influence and help them which seems almost miraculous. That is the effect that we find in ourselves, and that is what we learn to have been the case in Jesus. His union with God may not have given Him precise knowledge of the authorship of the psalms nor an exact idea of the end of the world; no more did it give him six wings or eyes before and behind. He was man and it is man's task to learn the facts of the past in the sweat of his brow and to perceive the tendencies of the future through the spectacles of the present. It did give Him an unerring insight into the lives and works of His fellow-men, an unfailing love for them, a power of truth and selflessness which could not only restore the broken and heal the afflicted, but could control inanimate matter and render Him capable of manifesting to His followers His survival of bodily death. And it not only gave Him this, but it led Him to claim that He was Son of God, the revealer of His heavenly Father to men.

Now if we ask ourselves what from our human point of view this claim means, we

must set aside all the conventional notions borrowed from a too literal rendering of the metaphors of earthly parentage or earthly sovereignty. Parables like that of the Wicked Husbandmen, or allegories like Athanasius' story of the king sending his son to dwell in a house in a city and so ennobling the place, are rich in meaning if, and only if, we penetrate to the spiritual realities that they enshrine. Most theology, even that of the Creeds in such phrases as "came down from heaven" or "sitteth at the right hand of the Father," has to be interpreted in the same way. We must constantly be asking ourselves whether our formulae convey a concrete meaning or are mere Shibboleths, be assuring ourselves that the outward and visible signs do really carry with them inward and spiritual grace. So in this case it appears that the Sonship of the Only-begotten signifies that Jesus has uninterrupted contact with God so complete as to make God no longer objective to Him, to give Him a sense of personal identification with the Deity, and to bestow upon Him the divine outlook and attitude so that He can reproduce them, as

far as they can be reproduced, within the compass of His life on earth. He is the perfect representative of God to man, because He is the perfect representative of man to God. Such a representative remains the highest concept of the divine to which men, while they are men, can ever attain. Angels or Martians, beasts of the field or fiends of the pit, may know God otherwise: that is no concern of ours: we can know Him only through our own natures and best as incarnate: that is all, and that is enough. For us Jesus is God.

And if the supreme revelation of God to man is through the man, Christ Jesus, "Thou hast it; use it and forthwith, or die!" Our religion is sadly weakened by not being sufficiently Christo-centric. We are so ready to apologise for and improve upon Christ's portrait of the Godhead. We talk of the revelation of God in nature and set it alongside of the revelation in Jesus—though this simply means that we think our interpretation of God comparable with His. We talk of the message of Moses or Plato or the Buddha and try to expand the Christian

gospel so as to include their teaching and ideals—that is we deny the completeness of our Master's work and disobey His warning against patched garments. Let us by all means follow up every path that leads or seems to lead Godward: for so we shall discover Jesus more fully and appropriate His teaching in all its freshness. But if we want to see God as plainly as men can, what sense is there in setting up our own rush-lights when the Sun of righteousness has risen? The voice of the holy ones throughout the centuries hails Him as the Light of the world; mankind and His Church delight to "walk on still in darkness" "because their deeds are evil," or in twilight, the twilight of other gods.

To safeguard this truth of the adequacy of Jesus is the purpose of the historic definitions of the Christian faith, of the famous ὁμοούσιον, and of all those metaphysical elaborations which delighted an age when men thought it shame to confess ignorance. The Fathers, like the Apostles and all Christian folk, were convinced that Jesus was the "image of the invisible God." In the course of argument,

an argument centuries long, they devised many formulae to express their conviction, and assure its acceptance. They were misled by their belief that the Incarnation involved the physical as well as the ethical qualities of God, that the Deity was to be known as Existence rather than as Love, that they could dogmatise about the infinite. Step by step they pushed forward their doctrines until, though their substance may be true, they are too detailed and too all-embracing to suit the taste of an age which is proud of the humility of the man of science. They enforce upon us precepts as to the pre-existence of Jesus and of His relationship to God as the Second Person of the Trinity, when we feel that such subjects are within the realm of speculation and possibility rather than of certainty. We recognise that these forms were inevitable at the time when they were drawn up, that their purpose was to compel upon the Church a belief in the divinity of her Lord rather than to display a delight in metaphysics, and that their logic, if logic might be pressed so far, is sound. But we are inclined to rebel against the decree which

settles by Catholic authority matters on which human knowledge must needs be fragmentary, which enforces upon us a philosophy and psychology fifteen centuries old, and which makes our membership in the Church dependent upon our acceptance of this decree. Sticklers for exact traditionalism may well be reminded of Gregory Nazianzen's wholesale condemnation of Church Councils, and of Gregory of Nyssa's advice to dogmatists, that before they are so positive about the nature of God they should ask themselves how much they know of the nature of the ant.

We do not admit that metaphysical doctrines have in themselves much religious value, so long as Christ's uniqueness and completeness is maintained. No doubt they have some independent worth, and a proper place in the Christian scheme of things, provided their importance is not exaggerated. But it is abundantly plain that far too much attention has been and still is devoted to them, and that this undue emphasis is positively injurious to Christianity. For not only does it give unbelievers cause to blaspheme our faith as a thing vainly imagined and most

presumptuous, and to instil doubt into the hearts of many who else would confess Christ openly; but it distracts the attention of the orthodox from Jesus to the Trinity, fosters an unreal conception of His significance, and prevents the appreciation and use of the truth of His manhood. We do not believe that the likeness of the eternal Son enthroned in heaven and having in His hand seven stars can ever turn the world upside down: we know that the Gospel of Jesus the crucified has done so once and can do so again. And in His name we beg leave to set aside the garniture with which time has decked and obscured Him, and to present His beauty unadorned. Let us return to the simpler faith of the first century, if we want to recover its mightier works.

In questions of detail, if we are challenged about the pre-existence of Jesus, we can only urge that we shall be in a better position to reply when, if ever, we know whether we ourselves existed previous to our birth here, and if so under what conditions. It is surely absurd to suppose that we know all about the personality and nature of God when we

cannot even explain what we are and whence we came ourselves. The text in St. John which is the chief support for a belief that Christ was conscious of a prenatal existence, "Before Abraham was, I am," simply asserts His union with that "which is and was and is to come" and need imply no more than this; and to dogmatise about His descent from God, His condescension and His self-emptying, is to take our stand upon very insecure foundations. No doubt the position is a tempting one because its acceptance seems to supply a religious lesson of great worth. But when we examine the matter it becomes doubtful whether the value thus attached to the inferences from His pre-existence is not obtained by being subtracted from the actions of His Incarnation. The same lesson of sacrifice can be drawn much more easily from the fact that He refused the throne of earth, than from the theory that He relinquished the throne of heaven. His self-abnegation in submitting to human birth is only emphasised at the expense of our appreciation of His submission to human death. It is bad policy, if nothing worse, to base our

message upon what is and must be matter of speculation and the Creeds, when we might base it upon history and the Gospels. And it is a mistake which can very easily be remedied: for there is no immediate need for doctrinal restatement or violent change. What we want is not the denial of the pre-existence, but a shifting of the stress from the pre-incarnate to the incarnate, from the eternal Son of God to the historical Jesus of Nazareth.

As to the Trinity, there is obviously much to be said against belief in a lonely Monad. Life, human and divine, seems best defined as the capacity for forming relationships; and Love implies the same thing. The old definition "a distinction without a difference" presents that paradox of diversity and unity which we find everywhere in life and which may therefore probably reflect the very nature of the Godhead; Love especially has in it the two sides of the same paradox, a yearning after union with the beloved, and a delight in the beloved because he is not ourself, a delight that shrinks from the thought of union. Many hints doubtless there are which make

the doctrine more appropriate than the circumstances of its history in the Church or the orthodox defence of it would lead one to believe. Like many other dogmas of the Catholic faith it becomes more and more congruous and satisfactory as we grow in the knowledge and love of Christ, and learn to approach it from the right standpoint. But so long as our conception of personality is bound up with time and space, we cannot do more than take these hints and use them so far as we can to vitalise the dry bones of a metaphysic that tried to see God unveiled and has suffered the fate of Acteon in consequence.

So too with the question of the "miraculous" element in the life of our Lord, the important matter is that we should accept Him as divine and as alive. By comparison the exact mode by which the Incarnation and the Resurrection were effected is unimportant. Our attitude towards both of them must be conditioned by our whole outlook upon the problem of the relation of mind to matter, and it cannot be either right or wise for the Church to foreclose to her members

enquiry upon so legitimate a subject of research. The advance of human knowledge is giving us a truer insight into the composition of the material universe and the laws which are expressed in it, and every fresh development of science will have its influence upon theology. For believers to maintain that they can dispense with the duty of study and the possibility of restatement, or that their religion gives an ultimate answer, acceptance of which is binding upon all Christians, is to bring upon themselves Christ's curse. Orthodox obscurantists would do well to apply to themselves sundry remarks in the First Gospel anent Scribes and Pharisees, and in St. Paul anent the Law: they are highly illuminating.

Most people nowadays will allow that the time has come when we must be free to confess that on matters of speculation, like the metaphysics of the Godhead or the state of the departed, we cannot give an unqualified reply. Even if we do not set much store by our own intellectual honesty, we shall all hesitate to put stumbling-blocks in the way of God's children. Anyone who has had any dealings with young folks knows the hideous tragedy

of the thousand souls who yearn for the Christ but shrink from the presumptuous and often blasphemous nonsense that is taught in His name by His preachers. The wicked libel that men are agnostics through moral faults is still glibly pleaded as the excuse for our failure; whereas the exact opposite is nearer to the truth. It is the men with a regard for their own honesty, with a knowledge of their own ignorance, with a reverence for the mystery of things, the best men in fact, whom we are losing. No doubt it is partly their own fault; they take the language of our formularies too literally, and suppose that we mean what we say; they have not had to learn those arts of subterfuge by which we explain away the Articles and edit the Creeds: but it may be questioned whether this would make them less fit to be Christians, disciples of Him who claimed to be the Truth. No doubt much of the blame may be laid at the doors of those who still insist that woman was made out of man's rib or that Christ's death was a sacrifice to avert the wrath of the Father, or who make a fetish out of fasting communion or the eating of fish on Friday;

yet so long as we refuse to speak plainly and to repudiate what is absurd or extravagant, they cannot but interpret our silence as consent: we must bear our share of the guilt.

It is of the utmost importance that these tragedies should be faced, if we are to answer the objection that is always raised against any plea for greater liberty. We are at once told that the driving force of Christianity comes from its dogmatism, that a gospel which cannot give a final reply to enquirers will lose its grip, that few people have either time or brains to form their own opinion, or wisdom to be able to reserve judgment, that they want a clear hard narrow creed, to be accepted credulously "by faith" and to bring certitude for this life and assurance for the life to come. Then we are reminded of the simple peasantry of Bavaria, or the "broken earthenware" of the Salvation Army, and warned of the awful peril of vagueness and pandering to unbelief—that is of sincerity and sympathy.

We have already agreed that the salvation-value, the test of saving souls, is the soundest criterion of any theology, and we will devote

the next lecture to the discussion of the practical results which follow upon our study of the Christ. But we would conclude here by reminding ourselves that if narrow orthodoxy has its advantages it also has its evils; if it wins the ignorant and vicious by its finality, it repels the educated by its arrogance; if it claims to be Christianity, it has all the outward signs of Pharisaism. It is time to escape from the *Summa theologiae* and return to the gospel of Jesus, to "the weightier matters of the law, sincerity, and sympathy, and love"—*τὴν κρίσιν καὶ τὸ ἔλεος καὶ τὴν πίστιν.*

LECTURE FIVE

MAN'S SALVATION THROUGH JESUS

It remains in this final lecture to justify if we can our doctrine of Jesus from the standpoint of its consequences. Every theology must bear fruit in a soteriology unless it is to be cut down as a cumberer of the ground, and only the years can declare whether what has been newly planted will bring forth unto repentance. To vindicate any theory of religion we must refer it to the judgment of the ordinary man; and then it will not be enough to satisfy his reason or grip his imagination, if we do not touch his heart and change his life. If it feeds souls, and only by that proof, can we be sure of our tree—for men do not gather figs of thistles. But while no man dare claim that his views have thus been approved, and while therefore we

can look for no real verdict as yet, we can and must enquire into the tendencies of our belief. Is it such that fruit may reasonably be expected ? Have we any grounds for hope that it will not be sterile ? Until we have satisfied ourselves to the best of our ability on these points, we must keep our tree unplanted, lest we be found to have placed thorns and briars in the garden of the Lord.

Put in another way, what we have got to do is to see whether our interpretation of the Incarnation leads on to any doctrine of Atonement. We have tried to show that from our belief in the manhood of Jesus and our examination of His character we were forced to conclude that He possessed to a unique degree certain qualities which follow from communion with God, that He claimed that this was the source from which He derived them, and that from the standpoint of human experience we could not but accept His claim. Further, we urged that all the speculative matters that bulk so largely in our formularies were relatively trivial and unessential by comparison with the single fact that Jesus is to man the supreme re-

vealer, the one personification in human guise, of God. Can we contend that what will seem to many believers an emasculated doctrine is really adequate to explain the miracle of salvation and to continue the working of that miracle ? Can any true union between God and man be effected by a Jesus who will seem to some a mere man ? Does not the failure of Arianism prove that Christ, unless His consubstantial oneness with the eternal Father be placed beyond question, is not mighty to save ; and will not our willingness to drop metaphysics lead us to a similar failure ? Surely the eternal attributes of the Son of God are those that give peace to His saints and bring sinners to repentance : it is because He is not man, that He can save man.

Now these questions are vital : if we cannot answer them, we may put our theology on the scrap-heap at once. For it is the business of Christianity to save souls, not to weave theories, and whatever does not promote salvation is damned already thereby. And it is not enough to defend ourselves by attacking our questioners, tempting though the line

of attack may be. We must not be negative and critical, but positive and constructive.

Nevertheless, before we define our own position, we must pause for a moment to emphasise once more the peril, because the absurdity, of this craving for finality and eternity. The existence of such an instinct may, and probably does, give good ground for belief that our desires will one day be satisfied: it does not in the least justify us here and now in playing upon the wishes and imposing upon the credulity of the ignorant. It may be that a nurse can soothe her children by telling them that the moon is good to eat, or that it is inhabited by a man and his dog, or even that a cow jumped over it: but if the children believe her and try to fly up to heaven out of the nursery window, they will get a nasty bump from mother earth. Which things are an allegory: our nurse, the Church, is at the moment looking anxiously from the window and listening to the moaning of her too credulous charges.

It was my lot some few years ago to listen to an evangelistic address given by the greatest

living revivalist preacher, an American whose heavenly wigwam must be decorated with a vast collection of the scalps of those whom he has brought to the Lord. He began by telling us a few facts of popular science—how many men there were on the earth, how many earths you could put into the sun, how many suns you could see in the universe—and then, having piled up this mountain of figures, he confronted us with the statement that the Creator of all this, in all His eternal infinite splendour, was keenly and personally interested in each one of us, the millionth millionth atom of His world. When he went on to talk of this Creator sending His Son, His only Son—the whole business was a nightmare! The poor man may have made a few converts; he was taking the right road to make many infidels. Afterwards it came to me with quite a shock to remember that this blind terror of the bigness of the universe is only a bogey, before which so long as we are men we must not grovel. But Jesus, "divinest when Thou most art man," the Jesus of the Gospels, was very refreshing in contrast.

Now that kind of thing must go. It isn't Christianity; it isn't the Bible; it isn't commonsense. No doubt with a magnetic speaker and an emotional and uneducated audience it may be made very effective: but it certainly will not save normal people; it is much more likely to damn them. And with it must go all such trifling with infinity. We may cajole or frighten men by airing our intimacy with the eternal; we shall not save them: and this is our sole concern.

But if this goes, we are left with the question what it is that can and does bring salvation. We must not be content to take without examination any of the ready-made replies with which those who have nostrums to offer will advertise their wares. We are not to be satisfied with a cliché answer, whether it be faith, or baptism, or the Holy Spirit: for faith means either bare acceptance, or mere credulity, or burning loyalty; and baptism either means white magic, or else obviously isn't a complete answer; and the Holy Spirit means—one often wonders what it does mean to many of those who most glibly take the name in vain! No,

we must remind ourselves what this business of salvation involves, what the problem to be solved is, before we venture to present its solution.

Unpopular as is such a beginning nowadays, sin, the fact of sin, is the only sound starting-point for religion. It is in their rejection of the Fall of man, or of the condition of mankind which this unpleasant doctrine purports to account for, that the typically modern theories, theological and political, make the blunder that is their undoing. We saw how the New Theology neglected this, talked nonsense about Potential Christs, and has now died of old age. New Thought, Christian Science, Theosophy, all the fads and fancies of yesterday, neglected this and are faring likewise. For no sane person, except perhaps in America which in these matters counts for very little, cares for Beauty with a large B when the world is full of war, or the Delusion of Disease when men are maimed and shattered hourly, or for the Astral Body when the physical body is in torment. What sane people want is deliverance from evil. If the war has taught us nothing else, it has at

least vindicated beyond dispute the Christian habit of calling men miserable sinners. The fate of Internationalism and of Mr. Norman Angell proves that point beyond denial.

And sin, as every one knows who has ever felt its power, is no superficial blemish. No mere palliative, no surface treatment is any use :

οὐ πρὸς ἰατροῦ σοφοῦ
θρηνεῖν ἐπῳδὰς πρὸς τομῶντι πήματι.

It needs the knife ; and we must cut deep. Indeed the only language at all appropriate to the magnitude of the change required is that of the Scripture. We want a new birth : our flesh " must come again like the flesh of a little child " if we are to be clean : we must " die unto sin " if we are to " live unto righteousness." What we require is something that will literally lift us out of ourselves. For the old theologians were right when they said that the primal sin was pride, selfishness ; and only by escaping self can we escape sin. Is there any power that can set us free ? How is a man to be delivered from the burden of this death ?

There is only one way by which such a transformation can be effected, only one way by which we can lose ourselves: and that way is the "more excellent way" of St. Paul, the way of love. It is exactly true to say that a man becomes what he loves, that as we love we cease to be ourselves and enter into the life of another. Each one of us is simply a tangle of threads of influence; his thoughts woven from the thoughts of others, a phrase from so and so, an idea from such and such a book; his habits coloured by those of the people who surround him, by the traditions in which he was brought up. Every new acquaintance adds his thread to the patchwork, until we almost wonder whether we have even the smallest thing that is our own. Truly are we members one of another, knit together in the very stuff and fibre of our lives, so that we live in those around us and they in us.

And in this medley of borrowings which is myself certain chief creditors are obvious, those who have left a great deposit for good or evil in me, those under whose influence I have most largely come. They may have

affected me in any of the various sides of my personality: the scholar will force his ideas upon me by weight of intellect, the artist will infect me with his own sense of beauty, the man of action will stimulate me to an energy as fervid as his own. But all these, however vastly they may change my life, are to some extent thwarted by their own power. They make me their slave not their friend. There is nothing reciprocal in our relationship: it is one of admiration and terror, not of love. Only the man who refuses to be a tyrant, and "no longer calls us servants," can command us utterly. Only by those to whom we can respond, those whom we can meet in sincerity and sympathy, those who love us and whom we love, are we wholly and permanently transformed: for these alone touch the whole of us and stir us to our very depths, so that we yield ourselves to them without reserve with an abandon that ambition and fear cannot inspire. To the possible extent of such influence there seems to be no bound. We have all seen Darby and Joan couples who have lived so long together that they have grown alike

even in face and voice as well as habit and outlook. We have all had a friend whose thoughts have for a time been as our thoughts and his ways as our ways, whose mind has been open to us so that we can read it without speech, whose whole self we have absorbed so that we no longer live, he liveth in us.

It is upon this idea of self as the enemy and of the influence of another as the sole means of escape that Christian ethics are based. So Christ taught when He said that it was not He but the Father who did the works, and that as He was in the Father so should we be in Him, and when He proclaimed that whosoever loveth his life loseth it and he that loseth findeth. And this is why all the cults and systems, which aim at self-development, are to that extent anti-Christian, however exalted their ideals or successful their efforts. To the Christian all and every escape from self is a move in the right direction: life is a going out and not a coming in; it is centrifugal, not centripetal. That is why Christ preferred the harlot because she loved much to the ecclesiastic who has glory of men, the generosity of the

poor to whose quality belongs the Kingdom of Heaven to the charity of the rich who unless God change them cannot enter into it. That is why Paul and Seneca for all their surface resemblance are as eternally opposite as the poles. And yet the Church at one time thought Seneca almost if not quite a Christian, and has canonised Jerome the cantankerous ascetic, and Cyril of Alexandria who lied and bribed, thieved and murdered, for the glory of himself!

It is worth while to note in passing how complete a change would come over our religious life if these truisms were accepted. Meekness not self-advertisement would possess the earth: a man's religion would be tested less by his regularity in attending public worship than by his capacity for making good friends: we should have more fellowship and fewer sermons: the comradeship of the cricket-team would not be more real than the comradeship of the altar: the envy also of Dissent shall depart and the adversaries of the Church shall be cut off; dissenters shall not envy churchmen and churchmen shall not vex dissenters.

However much, however plainly, we fail, there is the ideal, an ideal that is unshakeably true. Love and love only is the alchemy that can transmute the dross when nothing else can change it. Under its influence we lose, unconsciously but none the less completely, those selfish leanings which are our natural endowment, and become permeated with the quality of the beloved. For this is the very definition of love, the giving of ourselves to another and the receiving of that other into ourselves, so that my substance is assimilated to what I love.

At once then we see how by the love of Christ a direct road to God is opened up for men. Here instead of worrying myself about the comprehension of the infinite, I can find infinity translated into terms which do not merely satisfy my intellect or attract my mystic faculty, but appeal directly to every element in my being. Man cannot love the Absolute: he cannot love a corporation or a philosophic system or a code of ethics: and when religion is presented to him in these forms, though they may influence the appropriate sides of his nature, they will

fail to dominate him in his entirety. Only love for a person can hold the united devotion of heart and mind and will: and since "we needs must love the highest when we see it," only love for the divine person will call out our devotion in its richest measure. How shall a man love God whom he has not seen? Plainly comes the answer, "By loving his brother, that God-like brother, whom he has seen." There is the bridge, the way more direct than visions and prophecies and more satisfying than speculation or the Law, that excellent way that leads man to God by Him who called Himself the Way. We are to give ourselves in love to Jesus, to reproduce through love His Spirit in us, to share the mind of Him in whom "dwells the fulness of the Godhead in bodily form."

It is so simple a gospel that no misconception can possibly arise except perhaps out of the word love. Men will often say, "Yes, I know that love alone transfigures and changes, for in my own life I can trace the manifold influences of those that I have loved. But how can one love Christ as one loves a friend? The rapture of the visible

and bodily presence, the subtle effects of contact with a human being, the joys of mutual silence and of long unstudied talk, all these things and the passion that they stir in us make our earthly love so different from the ethereal devotion which is all that we can feel for Christ. The one is so robust, so effortless; the other so pallid and strained: the one is flesh and blood, the other 'such stuff as dreams are made on.' How can we apply the same term to two such different emotions?"

Now for most of us that is only too true. If we honestly compare our sense of the reality of Christ and of our love for Him with our feelings for our earthly friends, we shall be quick to confess with shame "our prayer so languid and our faith so dim." Few of us can truthfully say that we have not loved father or mother more than Him—but then few of us would claim without the deepest misgiving that we were fit to be His disciples. Our love for Him does indeed fade into nothingness when we compare it with what we give to our friends, poor though even that may be. But we may perhaps

get a grain of comfort from the fact that the two emotions are not, and cannot be, fully of the same kind. The contrast is heightened because to us the word love comes with a meaning that is heavily coloured by the associations of earth. Those strong bodily elements, right and inevitable in the relations of us who are not yet discarnate spirits, are not and ought not to be applicable to our feelings towards Christ. There is something morbid, something almost lustful, about the hysterical passion of many self-styled "brides of the Lamb": for there is a legitimate distinction between our love for Him who is, like ourselves, human and the making of His humanity the object of an erotic attachment. We love the bodily form of the beloved, but at our peril we must love it not for itself alone, but in sacramental wise, because it enshrines for us and conveys to us the self of which it is the outward and visible sign. To centre our love upon the body is to be guilty of idolatry, to change love into lust. We must not altogether condemn the measure of our love for Christ, because we are less sensible

of His presence with us than we are of that of our friends: for the medium which transmits to us the consciousness of His presence is less gross, more translucent, than the tangible material flesh through which our spirits reveal themselves. There is less room for lower elements in our love for Him: they are present, but in smaller degree: and we must allow for the difference.

We shall see more clearly the point of this distinction if we realise the difficulty that the writers of the New Testament felt in selecting the proper terms to apply to the relation of the believer to His Lord. Love was then as now a word freely prostituted to the basest uses. Eros had become a very carnal deity, and foul associations had gathered round most of the language of affection. Hence it is that St. Paul, save in the great chapter where, having just dealt frankly and faithfully with the sins of the flesh, he feels able to speak of love without the risk of misunderstanding, prefers to call this sentiment "faith"; and if we would understand its quality, the alternative title is suggestive and helpful. A comparison with St. John shows plainly

enough that the Pauline faith implies exactly the same ardent devotion, the same transfiguring virtue, which the older apostle never hesitates to call by its higher name: for although he uses this colder term St. Paul has described more powerfully than anyone the scope and effects of the relationship in such sayings as "to me to live is Christ" or "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." From his contrast between the Law which satisfied the mind and directed the will, but failed because it could not inspire the heart, and faith which, because it is the loyalty of a person to a Person, enlists every function of our being and transforms us wholly into the likeness of our Master, we can gain perhaps more clearly than from anything else an idea of the meaning and of the power of the new gospel.

This conception of His Spirit dwelling in us, as we yield ourselves in faith or love to Jesus, gives us a concrete idea of "the gift of the Holy Ghost." Nothing in the whole range of Christian dogmatics is more incomplete than the theology of the Third Person of the Trinity; and nothing is more

confusing alike to the scholar and the novice at the present time. In the early Church the incarnate Christ and the Spirit of Christ were scarcely if at all separated; the functions of inspiration and life-giving, which later ages ascribed to the Holy Ghost, were necessarily assigned to the Logos; and, until the concept of Logos gave place to that of Son, Christians were virtually ditheistic. Even so late as the middle of the fourth century, when Serapion's liturgy still contained an epiclesis addressed not to the Spirit but to the Word, there was an evident confusion. Then when Arianism was in its decline, the problem of the work and person of the Holy Ghost was settled suddenly and almost without debate, by transferring to Him that share of revelation which is not definitely connected with the act of creation or with the incarnate life and risen glory of Jesus, and that dignity which had been found after so fierce a struggle to be appropriate to the Son. The only arguments for this verdict were those from analogy, and no attempt was made to deal with the question on other than the most mechanical lines. The real difficulties, the concrete and

commonsense treatment of the distinction between His work and that of Christ, and the very serious uncertainty as to His personality were settled arbitrarily and really shirked. And the defects of the Fathers have never been fully remedied.

The question is far too hard to be discussed in what must be a mere paragraph, and, if it is put briefly, much that is highly disputable will have to be said without qualification or proper safeguards. But it appears that on a subject so freely misunderstood and so vital to a true notion of the Christian's attitude towards His Master we ought to state, if we can, what we think. The term "Holy Ghost," then, is applied to that mode or aspect under which we mortals can know and translate into the language of our world the eternal Godhead, to that ideal which inspired the prophets, that communion which strengthened and assured Jesus, that realisation of the mind of Christ which gives to His followers their oneness with their Lord. Just as we speak of God in His infinite capacity as "the Father," and of God when known to us through the revelation in Jesus

as "the Son," so we speak of God when revealed to us through our own experience, individual or corporate, of Him whether in or apart from Jesus as "the Holy Ghost." He represents the immanent energy of the Godhead so far as this can be distinguished from the incarnate and transcendent aspects.

This, I am aware, will strike the student of heresy as perilously like Sabellianism: but, although the subject is one of the most obscure in the history of early doctrine, the charge is not a fair one unless it be brought equally against the Creed of Nicea in its original form. For what was condemned in Sabellius was the denial of fixity or permanence to the different modes of the divine essence, that he spoke of God in terms appropriate to an actor playing three parts consecutively, and that by "person" he meant a phase or rôle assumed transitorily in the progress of divine self-revelation. The Fathers in combating him insisted only that the differentiation in the unity was an eternal condition of the existence of the Godhead: they did not mean or say that each mode was a separate self-determining entity. The word "person"

in Patristic formulae implied something much less individual than what we now mean by it, as is proved by the whole usage of the Latin *persona*, and by the fact that the Greeks repudiated its equivalent πρόσωπον which had already been used by Sabellius. Even the Greeks, though " hypostasis " refers to a more fixed and static mode than *persona*, were very far from reckoning the Persons of the Trinity as fully homologous to so many human units. Current orthodoxy, at least in its usual forms, would have seemed sheer tritheism to Athanasius—and indeed is actually little else. We shall not, I believe, be far wrong if we define the Holy Ghost in some such way as this : granting that " every good gift and every perfect boon is from above and cometh down from the Father of Lights," we shall describe the vision of God mediated to us in time and space as the work of the Holy Ghost, of that Spirit of Holiness which appears in fullest glory in Jesus alone but which is present as a divine spark in each one of us and can either be quenched or kindled into flame ; that the Spirit is thus, as St. Paul teaches us, not

only the Spirit of Holiness but at once the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus; that as the holiness of Jesus infinitely transcends our holiness and is indeed, so far as our experience goes, complete, we can best think of the Holy Ghost in terms of Jesus, as that revelation of God which was first given in the person of His Son and has since been transmitted to us as we come to know and share in the mind of Christ. To think of the Holy Ghost in other terms is to imply that Jesus is incomplete as a revealer of God: it is to be false to Scripture, and to deny both the unity of the Godhead and the divinity of the Son.

And so we are led on to the thought of the Church. If we are each made in a literal sense members of Christ by the indwelling in us of His Holy Spirit, so we are inevitably and again quite literally made members one of another. It is as clear as Euclid's axiom that "things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another." So far as we are believers, we do to that extent share in the one mind, submit our idiosyncrasies to the one influence, and become not only

like Christ but like one another. Hard as it is to reconcile such an ideal with the bickerings and diversities of churches and Christians, terrible as it is to think that our religion is to be estimated by such a test, this and nothing less than this is the picture which St. Paul and Jesus Himself have drawn for us, "that they may all be one," "one body having many members," "one body and one spirit." We are to look forward to the reuniting of the "broken arcs" into the "perfect round," to the Second Advent, the return of the "Christ that is to be," when His Spirit dwells once more in a body "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth," "built up in love, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God," "a perfect man," "the measure of the stature of His fulness."

In such a body membership, obviously conditioned by the possession of the Spirit and by that alone, would seem at first sight to have little to do with any visible church. Many of us throughout our lives, and most of us while we are young, cavil at the notion that an earthly institution is necessary. We

see the immense danger of formalism, we dread any return to that which Jesus so signally and forcibly condemned, we note the pretentious futility and unchristian tone of the churches, and we feel that if He were now incarnate He would apply to them the very language which He addressed to Scribes and Pharisees: for youth is ever self-reliant, undisciplined, rebellious, meeting any talk of authority with an echo of the contemptuous words that young Julian of Eclanum used to Augustine, "nil prodest multitudo insipientium."

Moreover, youth if rebellious is also idealistic, prone to forget that man is not a disembodied spirit but must receive impressions through the medium of his flesh, that he lives in a world where every reality must have its symbol, being himself dependent upon these symbols for the words in which he expresses his dislike of them. As we grow older, less sure of ourselves and more conscious of our imprisonment, we begin to understand that even love itself cannot dispense with its sacraments, that the ritual of the handshake and the kiss in our earthly relationships must have

its counterpart if our union with our divine friend is not to be vague and fitful.

In the early stages of our progress we may say, "I am strong and can do without bodily forms and outward observances: they are only symbols and I am concerned not with symbols but with realities." Then we discover that we have after all a responsibility to that church to which we belong and which, however much we doubt its value, is insistent in its claims upon us, that in fact "we who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." And so if God is good to us we learn our lesson, that we are ourselves weak, and that our earth-bound love, if it is to keep fresh and vigorous, must use thankfully and to the full all those helps, reminders, and encouragements, that the care of our Master and the experience of His followers have approved and commended to us. We find out that these symbols are effective, because they are not mere symbols, but do actually convey to us the reality of the presence of Christ and the fruition of His Spirit: by them something vital passes between us and Him:

we have entered sacramentally into union with Him. The memories of centuries of worship, the hallowed associations of place and ceremony, the discipline of regularity and monotony, all these things help to make our love less spasmodic and casual, to promote in us the constant renewal of the bond, so that we can look forward to the day when it may be habitual and complete.

And indeed as we study the details of the Church's system we shall discover more and more how well they have been adapted to subserve the purposes of our holy fellowship. Just as a living organism evolved in the course of ages is wondrously adapted in each minutest member to its purpose of sustaining and transmitting life, so the Church, wherever and so far as it has been faithful to this one object, the maintaining and propagating of the life of Jesus, has developed a structure suited to this end, a structure wherein every part, in itself perhaps meaningless, has nevertheless its necessary place in the equipoise and vitality of the whole. Only when it has forgotten its aim and lived for something else, for comfort or power or

popularity, has it ceased to embody the Spirit, and developed along lines that are false to its nature. Like an organism, if it is to live, it must change; to become rigid is death. New needs and an altered environment will call for the evolution of new and corresponding functions, and each fresh growth must be judged by its results: if it promote life in Christ, well; if not, then we may be sure that the change is retrograde, and we must not hesitate to diagnose, to amputate, to restore. Similarly certain functions, which have been of vital importance in the past, will in the lapse of time lose their usefulness and become atrophied for lack of proper exercise; and if the organisation is to be kept free from the disease which is inseparable from what has become superfluous, these must be tested ruthlessly and without sentimentality, and wherever expedient excised. Only if we are to be healers not assassins, reformers not schismatics, we must be humble and sincere, sympathetic and loving, we must have the mind of Christ, and do all under the guidance of His Spirit, for His body's sake which is the Church.

It is perhaps not an impertinence to emphasise the necessity of this last consideration as strongly as possible. The rule of love is and must always be supreme, and reforms which if carried will foster the growth of faction must be handled with the greatest wisdom and the most patient sympathy. At the moment it is hard to say which is the more depressing, the hesitations and lack of courage of our bishops, or the querulousness and lack of restraint of our younger leaders. It is to the former that our pathetic failure as a church to use the opportunity of the war is mainly due: but it is also to no small extent the fault of those who instead of concentrating on the central message of the Christian hope have dissipated their activities and destroyed their influence by clamouring for a restatement of doctrine or a rewriting of Service-books. They have used the present as an occasion for airing their peculiar fads instead of devoting themselves to the gospel of the love of Jesus. They have been negative and critical, rather than positive and practical. The times are far too heroic, their challenge far too momentous, for petty discussions as

to the historicity of the Virgin-birth, or the value of Sunday Mattins. The Church is faced with the terrible alternative, "World-power or Downfall," and must be free to devote all her strength to that one issue.

After all the failure is probably due not to our leaders alone, but to us all. We have all gone astray, and our only chance of redeeming the time is by a return to fundamentals. It is not the "hard sayings" of our doctrines or the archaic phrases of our liturgy which drive men to reject Christ; but the un-christian and loveless lives of His followers. If we would win them back to Him, we must devote ourselves to the expression in word and life of our discipleship, postponing our interest in dogmatic and ecclesiastical anachronisms and coming back whole-heartedly to the Author and Captain of our salvation. When we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us. Meanwhile it is waste and folly to bother about the new bottles until we are sure that our new wine is worth storing. When we have tested it and approved it to men as the true vintage of the Spirit of God, then, in

the strength of it, we and they can seek for that wherein it can be worthily contained, and we shall not then have to seek in vain.

What we have always to remember is this, that the one proof of any Christian institution is its ability to mediate to men the life of God in Christ. It is of very secondary importance whether a doctrine or a ceremony is in accordance with the spirit of the Reformation or of the Church Catholic; the verdict must ultimately be decided upon the question, "Does this assist or restrict the spread of the Spirit of Jesus?" Of course the study of history will help us, and help us greatly, towards a decision; but to treat the matter as if it could be settled primarily by the appeal to ancient authority is to destroy that freedom of development which is the first attribute of wholesome vitality. In this, as in all else, we must beware of confusing means with ends. We must never forget that the health of the whole is more important than the preservation of any of its component elements: for these have no value in themselves or apart from the body. Only if we would cure its diseases, we shall do

well to lay aside the surgeon's knife, which many of us are itching to use, at least until we have fully tried whether a change of interest and diet, a fresh exercise of neglected faculties, and in general a more rigid attention to the precise ends for which the organism exists, will not produce a wonderful recovery, and render a surgical operation unnecessary.

The Spirit which animates these senile limbs is itself eternally young, for it is the Spirit of that perfect love over which death and separation from the beloved can have no power. Only if this present body, this church of ours, is to continue to incorporate it, each one of us must consecrate ourselves to our high calling as members of Christ: for only so, only with our consent and co-operation, can He use us. That is the one condition of renewal. No changes of constitution, no nice adjustments of form or habit, no periods of rest and refreshment, no displays of noisy activity, can take the place of it. For the Spirit cannot flow through us if we will not submit ourselves wholly to His influence, and learn in love to lose ourselves in Him. Love, and love alone, can

save us, and bind us together into unity with one another and with Christ: and love seldom speaks to us amid the windy emotions of revivalist preaching, or the earthquake convulsions of doctrinal restatement, or the fiery energy of business methods.

Yet if we can hear and obey its still small voice, then we have confidence that the organism which has survived so many stages of growth, so many shocks and calamities, will develop strength to adapt itself to the requirements of these later days, will brace itself up to withstand the new assaults and satisfy the new hunger of the sons of men, and will stand before them once more as the abiding incarnation of Jesus, the earthly representative of God.

This absurdly simple doctrine of an Atonement wrought by the devotion of men to the man Christ Jesus in whom is reflected, by whom is transmitted, the nature of God, seems at first very far removed from the familiar phrases of dogmatists and churchmen. When our Protestant brothers tell us that we can only be washed white in the blood of Jesus or that He offered Himself

for the sins of the world, we are inclined to ask whether all this imagery has any possible connection with the plain fact of love for God in Christ. Similarly when we find Catholics talking about the regeneration of a child in baptism, or the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist, as if these were the central truths of our religion, we wonder how all this "tradition" can fail to make the Word of God of none effect. Now it is indisputable that pietist cant and ecclesiastical conventions are only too often dead wood upon the tree of life and would be all the better for drastic pruning. Such exaggerated symbolism as is commonly applied to the facts and practices of our faith is false to its only purpose; instead of revealing it conceals reality and misleads those who are seeking for it. None the less, if we hold fast to the basal belief that it is devotion to Jesus that saves men from themselves and unites them to God, and if we then have the patience to translate the verbiage into its corresponding facts, we shall find that even the crudest substitutionalism and the most material sacramentalism have a true

connotation. They may be exaggerated and distorted, but are not the mere matter of "words and names and your law" that they too often appear.

Before we close it will be well to examine in some detail our attitude towards the familiar account of the Atonement as it is presented under the metaphors of sacrifice or of ransom. For this statement of the doctrine does, on the one hand, unquestionably upset the faith of many who see in it nothing but what is revoltingly unreal, and, on the other, has a quite indisputable efficacy in converting the most hardened sinners. Many recent Christologies seem to lack these elements, their authors frankly admitting that the language of "blood and fire" is to them meaningless and intolerable. But if we are to abide by the test of fruits, it is certain that no presentation of the religion of Christ can produce more startling evidence of its value and therefore of its truth. Obviously nothing could be further removed superficially from such a doctrine than the simple gospel of love. And we have to ask ourselves whether the two are really inconsistent. Can

we, holding the views sketched in these lectures, use or give a meaning to the idea of the propitiatory sacrifice or of the transaction whereby we were bought at a price? To answer that will be no small proof one way or the other of the worth of our theory.

There is a stage in the growth of most young people when the Cross and its place in Christianity seem curiously exaggerated. Like the ancient Greeks, that race of children who in so many respects never grew up, we in our youth love to dwell rather upon the Incarnation than upon the Atonement. We are so enraptured with the divine life of Christ and with the hope of the imitation of that life in ourselves, that we do not feel the need or recognise the fitness of His Passion. We cannot bear to think that our hero was ever, could ever be, unappreciated and rejected; for life seems too glad a thing, manhood too noble, to have ever been stained by so shameful, so monstrous, a fault. We have not yet been awakened to the inherent possibilities of such vileness in our own natures, and we have still to learn that suffering is not necessarily a leprous blot

upon God's fair earth. So Calvary fills us with perplexity, almost with disgust: we are anxious to slur it over and explain it away. We cannot understand why our elders grow fond of the Crucifix with its torn and ghastly figure so different from the Christ whose joyous presence we have felt at our first communion. Even the great cry "Eloi eloi" we are fain to interpret as the opening verse of a psalm whose dominant note is one of triumph not of tragedy. We are satisfied with the redeeming life, and the account which we so often hear of the redeeming death seems a distorted travesty of the facts. Of course it is only a stage, an early stage, in our development, before we have known suffering or realised sin: but it is a stage during which revivalist preaching is certain to do more harm than good, to destroy faith rather than to create it.

It is only with experience that we learn to put the emphasis differently. More and more we come to see that the Cross is not merely the inevitable end, caused by the depravity of man and the helplessness of Jesus, but the very culmination and quint-

essence of the Ministry, a thing deliberately foreseen and wilfully sought, the final proof of that lesson of love which the incarnate life teaches from first to last. Christ the sufferer, Christ making the supreme offering of love, Christ in His seven words showing His love for us, demanding our love for Him, consecrating His love for His Father, this is the very epitome of the gospel. He recognised that Judaism failed to save man from himself through the lack of the personal element in its appeal: He felt that man could only be brought to realise the depth of his own wickedness and to yearn for a way of escape, if he were confronted by a signal example of the grim consequences of evil, and that the cost of such an awakening must be the death of the innocent: He saw that man, if he was to be saved, must be rapt out of himself by the power of love which should transfigure him into the likeness of the beloved: He planned to bring men through the influence of love into the same relationship to God as He Himself possessed, to make them sons of God because sharers of His own Spirit of Sonship: He

knew that only death, only an agony of the fiercest pain and scorn and failure that man could ever pass through, would crown His purpose and make His appeal for love irresistible: He foresaw that, if He did not drink the cup to the dregs, then we, anyone of us who dies for a friend, could claim to have done more than He: and so, to clinch the proof of His love for us, to demand the recompense of our love for Him, because it was the only way to win us freely from sin to God, He faced the Cross, of His own will, sparing neither Himself nor His followers, sure that it was expedient for them that He should go away, since only so could His Spirit come unto them.

And the change in them was His justification. The disciples who had before been self-centred, clamouring for thrones and greatness and in consequence swift to forsake and betray, lost in that fiery trial of their faith all thoughts of self, all trace of weakness, and came forth purified and tempered, men wholly consecrated to one abiding loyalty, wholly transformed by one consuming love. And, because they cared nothing for them-

selves but solely for Him, nothing on earth could hold or stay them : they were persuaded by the testimony of Calvary " that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any created thing, could separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord " : and so they turned the world upside down.

When we realise this, that the approach to God through love of the Son of God could only be opened if the Son by the shedding of His blood convinced us that He was utterly loving, utterly lovable, that we are no longer our own but bought at the price which He the sinless one chose to pay for us and for our love ; when we realise this, the language of sacrifice becomes appropriate, inevitable. The thing is so great that no words can exaggerate it. He died that we might be freed from sin : and, as we accept Him and through Him are set free, He becomes our propitiation. He died that we may live : call it vicarious sacrifice, if you want to be pedantic and to perplex : you will still be speaking only the truth.

For He comes to men now, as He came into this world and to His own at Jerusalem, for judgment, that we may judge Him and so ourselves be judged. He warns us in His own person of the taint and horror of our sin, that it falls not only upon the guilty, but upon the guiltless, that it must be borne by our fellows as well as by ourselves. He points us in His own person to the beauty of a life in God, a life of sincerity and sympathy, a life in which all men recognise the perfection of their own ideal. He offers us a way of escape from the one world to the other, from death to life, through the love of Him, the all-loving, the all-lovely, whereby His Spirit, the Spirit of God, may dwell in our hearts. And if we still hesitate, He shows us the greatness of His claim upon us, the price that He paid for this gift of escape, He shows us His hands and His side. All that there is of manhood in us must needs respond, confess the debt, and cry "My Lord and my God."

At a time like the present one cannot finish even so feeble an attempt as this to sketch the gospel of love without a confession of hope. If it be true that in the

Christ-life, the life of sincerity and sympathy, the life in God, is contained the redemption of the world; and if "it became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," then surely we can, we must, be confident that this war, for all its terror, is the Calvary which shall bring the earth to Pentecost. We have seen nation rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; yet must we not be afraid: for the word stands, and shall stand, "in your patience ye shall gain your souls." Not for us perhaps who have but stood at the brink of the furnace; we perchance shall share the fate of Nebuchadnezzar's mighty men and be slain. But those our brothers who have descended into the full blast and heat of it shall have their bonds loosed, and shall find one walking with them in the midst of the fire whose form is like a Son of God.

For "it is in those hours when men are risking their lives every moment that they show themselves as they are, bragging neither of their goodness nor of their badness. Every-

thing in them that was only artificially acquired or put on, all that drops off and the man alone remains. And thus one makes acquaintance with souls." Those are the words of a young soldier of Christ and of France, who died on the field of honour a few days after writing them. Truly they are rich in hope that the Spirit of love born of sincerity and sympathy in the pangs of sacrifice, love triumphant over the grave, will come to the world with an Easter message, "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore." Even so: come Lord Jesus.

There can be no more noble ending than some further words of Alfred Eugène Casalis, the soldier lad, barely nineteen years old, from whom I have quoted above. This is what he writes on the day on which he started for the trenches. "It is infinitely sweet in moments like this to feel that there are other souls around us and behind us who have the same purpose and ideal as ourselves and who pursue the same 'Following of the Star.' Others will uplift the torch that it was our hope to carry forward. Others, if we cannot,

will labour at the great work of conquering the world for its King, our King. Others . . . But I have too much faith in Life and its value to stop at this hypothesis. I do not wish to prepare myself for death but for life. For Life Eternal undoubtedly, but more immediately for life on earth. Certainly when I return I must be changed like everyone else; I shall no more have the right to be what I was before; otherwise what use would the war have been to me? Have we not the conviction that it is to renew humanity? And is it not our duty to be renewed ourselves first of all? And to begin with, it seems to me that we ought to develop and infinitely enlarge the conception of our ministry. Pastors, yes, no doubt this is what we ought to be, and missionaries also. But we ought to be more than that: we should be men; and yet more apostles. We ought to shine far beyond our own circle, and to attract around us all 'men of good-will.' And further —to strive so that every will with which we come in contact may become a good will.

"First of all, we shall have to change our preaching. Everything in it that is merely

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empty formula, however fine it may be, and however powerfully it may have contributed to make souls live, all that is empty formula to-day because our philosophic religious thought, or our experiences, or our conception of life, has outgrown it and burst its limits, all that must disappear. And what we shall put in its place will be not less grand, nor less beautiful, nor less true, if we seek it in the deepest recesses of our hearts united to God. And it will be not less Christian, for the Spirit of Christ is a Spirit which lives, which develops itself and is not fixed in a form always identically the same."[1]

[1] From *A Young Soldier of France*, letters translated by C. W. Mackintosh, published at the Baskerville Press, Eastbourne, 1916.

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